October 1926

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AMAZING STORIES

HUGO GERNSBACK
EDITOR

Stories by
H.G. WELLS
JULES VERNE
GARRETT P. SERVISS

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JULES VERNE'S TOMBSTONE AT AMIENS
PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY

AMAZING STORIES

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Our Cover

depicts the story from "Beyond the Pole," by A. Hyatt Verill, wherein one of the fearful, lobster-like creatures is shown investigating the, to them, strange, human creature which has so suddenly burst into their domain.

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THE SECOND DELUGE, by Garrett P. Serviss. A worthy successor to the story "A Columbus of Space." Although this story does not deal with interplanetarian travel it is a powerful as well as gripping story of a second deluge, which visited our planet. Don't miss it.

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T. O'CONOR SLOANE, A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D.
Noted Instructor, Lecturer and Author. Formerly Treasurer American Chemical Society and a practical chemist with many well known achievements to his credit. Not only has Dr. Sloane taught chemistry for years but he was for many years, engaged in commercial chemistry work.

Do you remember how the tales of pirate gold used to fire your imagination and make you want to sail the uncharted seas in search of treasure and adventure? And then you would regret that such things were no longer done. But that is a mistake. They *are* done—today and everyday—not on desert islands, but in the chemical laboratories throughout your own country. Quietly, systematically, the chemist works. His work is difficult, but more adventurous than the blood-curdling deeds of the Spanish Main. Instead of meeting an early and violent death on some forgotten shore, he gathers wealth and honor through his invaluable contributions to humanity. Alfred Nobel, the Swedish chemist who invented dynamite, made so many millions that the income alone from his bequests provides five $40,000 prizes every year for the advancement of science and peace. C. M. Hall, the chemist who discovered how to manufacture aluminum made millions through this discovery. F. G. Cottrell, who devised a valuable process for recovering the waste from flue gases, James Gayley, who showed how to save enormous losses in steel manufacture, L. H. Baekeland, who invented Bakelite—these are only a few of the men to whom fortunes have come through their chemical achievements.

What Some of Our Students Say of This Course:

I have not written since I received the big set. I can still say that it far exceeded my anticipations. Since I have been studying with your school I have been appointed chemist for the Scranton Coal Co. testing all the coal and ash by proximate analysis. The lessons are helping me wonderfully, and the interesting way in which they are written makes me wait patiently for each lesson.—MORLAIS COUZENS.

I wish to express my appreciation of your prompt reply to my letter and to the recommendation to the General Electric Co. I intend to start the student engineering course at the works. This is somewhat along electrical lines, but the fact that I had a recommendation from a reliable school no doubt had considerable influence in helping me to secure the job.—H. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

So far I've been more than pleased with your course and am still doing nicely. I hope to be your honor graduate this year.—J. M. NORKUS, JR.

I find your course excellent and your instruction, truthfully, the clearest and best assembled I have ever taken, and yours is the fifth one I've studied.—JAMES J. KELLY.

From the time I was having Chemistry it has never been thus explained to me as it is now. I am recommending you highly to my friends, and urging them to become members of such an organization.—CHARLES BENJAMIN.

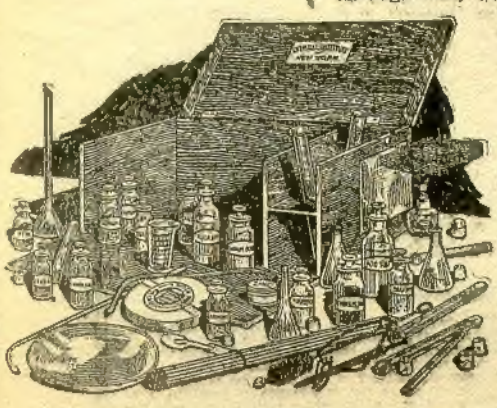
I shall always recommend your school to my friends and let them know how simple your lessons are.—C. J. AMDAHL.

I am more than pleased. You dig right in from the start. I am going to get somewhere with this course. I am so glad that I found you.—A. A. CAMERON.

I use your lessons constantly as I find it more thorough than most text books I can secure.—WM. H. TIBBS.

Thanking you for your lessons, which I find not only clear and concise, but wonderfully interesting. I am—ROBT. H. TRAYLOR.

I received employment in the Consolidated Gas. Co. I appreciate very much the good service of the school when a recommendation was asked for.—JOS. DECKER.



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VOLUME 1

AMAZING STORIES

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENTIFICTION

OCTOBER, 1926
NO. 7

HUGO GERNSBACK, *Editor*
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WILBUR C. WHITEHEAD, *Literary Editor*
C. A. BRANDT, *Literary Editor*
Editorial and General Offices: 53 Park Place, New York, N. Y.

Extravagant Fiction Today - - - - - - - - Cold Fact Tomorrow

IMAGINATION AND REALITY

By HUGO GERNSBACK

WHEN reading one of our scientifiction stories in which the author gives free rein to his imagination, providing he is a good story teller, we not infrequently find ourselves deeply thrilled. The reason is that our imagination is fired to the *n*th degree, and we thus obtain a real satisfaction from the time spent in reading the story, improbable as it often appears at first. I should like to point out here how important this class of literature is to progress and to the race in general.

The human mind is a tremendously complex machine, which often works in a very strange manner. A man sets out to invent a certain house appliance, and while engaged in his experimental work, gets a certain stimulus that takes him in an entirely different direction, so that the first thought of the house appliance may end in the invention of a factory labor-saving device, or perhaps something even more important.

When Alexander Graham Bell was a young man, he occupied himself by devising means of enabling the deaf to hear. This led him into electrical research work, and the apparatus, far from becoming a device by which the deaf can hear, became the present telephone. To be sure, loud-speaking telephones are made today for the use of the deaf, but this is only a by-product and not at all the actual and more important use of the instrument.

Hundreds and thousands of similar instances could be cited. An author, in one of his fantastic scientifiction stories, may start some one thinking along the suggested lines which the author had in mind, whereas the inventor in the end will finish up with something totally different, and perhaps much more important. But the fact remains that *the author provided the stimulus* in the first place, which is a most important function to perform.

On the other hand, many devices predicted by scientifiction authors have literally come true for many generations. There is an old popular saying that what man imagines, man can accomplish. This proverb of course, should be taken with a grain of salt, because not everything that man imagines is possible. For instance, I can imagine that I blow out the sun, or grasp the moon in my hand, or cut off my head without dying. Naturally such things are impossible. On the other hand, many of the so-called wild ideas which we read in our scientifiction stories may prove to be not quite so wild if they give an actual stimulus to some inventor or inventor-to-be who reads the story. And as long as there is a stimulus of any sort, we have no reason to complain, because we never realize where progress in any direction may lead us.

There is the well-known story of the inventor who had patented a mouse-trap, and finally sold the patent to a manufacturer, who found that an excellent burglar alarm could be made from the mouse-trap, with but a few changes. Another case of an original stimulus which, perhaps, went wrong, but finally became righted.

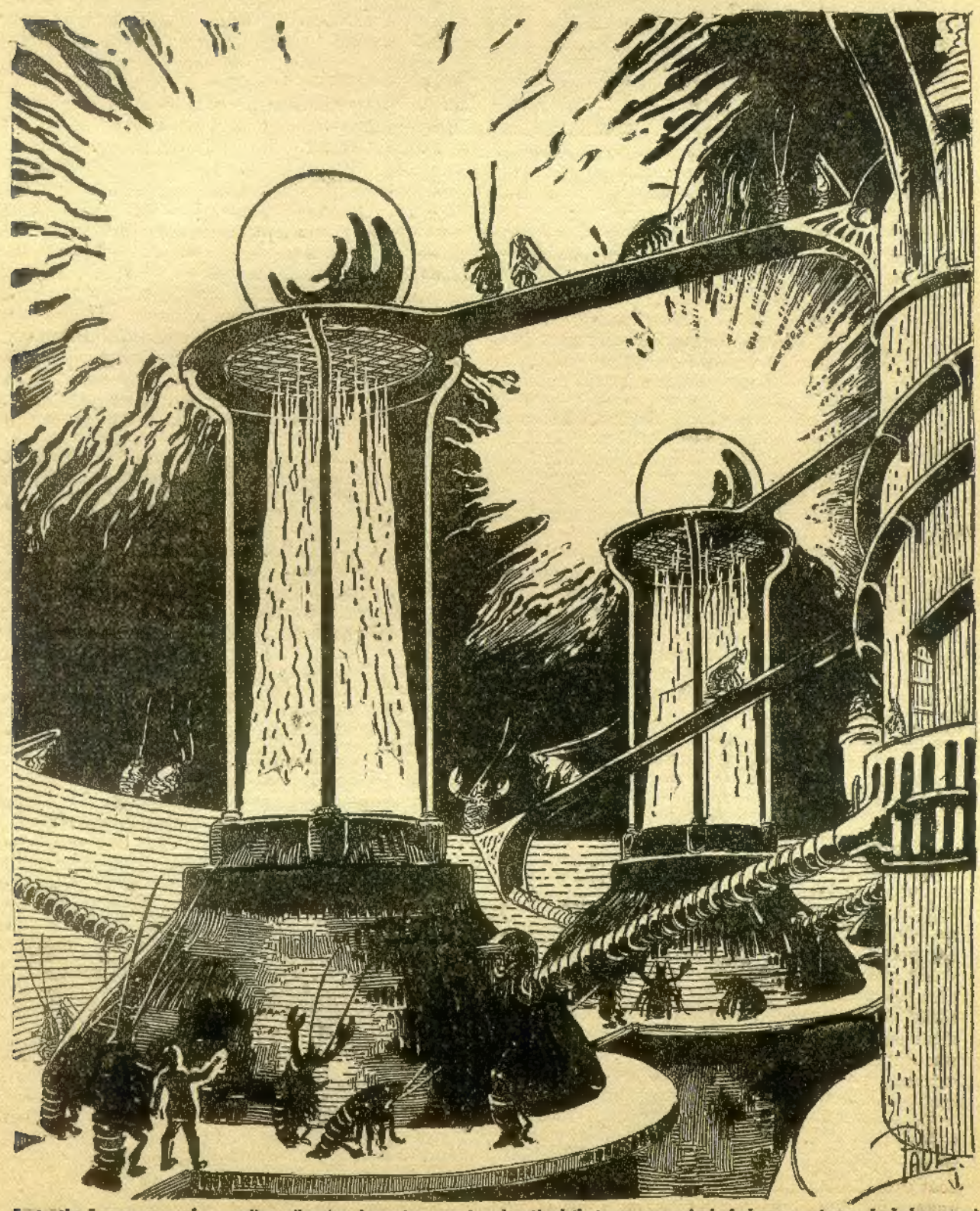
We should not, therefore, become too impatient if occasionally we encounter a seemingly impossible prediction or improbable plot. It is beyond our power to foresee what reaction this may produce in some one, and what tremendous consequences it may have in the future. And, strange to relate, the patent offices of most countries follow scientifiction stories pretty closely, because in many of these the germ of an invention is hidden. It is not necessary to actually build a model to be an inventor; often it becomes necessary, for court proceedings and for patent reasons, to find out who really was the original inventor of a certain device; if the inventor is an author who brought out the device, even in a fiction story, this would, in the long run, entitle him to ownership of the patent, always providing that the device is carefully described, as to its functions, its purpose and so forth.

For instance, in the United States, the inventor would have two years from the publication of the story to apply for a patent. Thus it will be seen that a scientifiction story should not be taken too lightly, and should not be classed just as literature. Far from it. It actually helps in the progress of the world, if ever so little, and the fact remains that it contributes something to progress that probably no other kind of literature does.

Mr. Hugo Gernsback speaks every Monday at 9 P. M. from WRNY on various scientific and radio subjects.

BEYOND The POLE

~ By A. Hyatt Verrill ~



Instantly, I was aware of a peculiar, vibrating, humming sound and noticed that my companion's feelers or antennae had risen erect above his head and were moving slowly, gracefully back and forth, as were the feelers of the two other creatures; but no word or sound that could be thought speech issued from any of the three. . . . A moment later we were beside the great, cylindrical object.

Introductory note by Dr. Abbott E. Lyman

BEFORE giving this really marvelous tale to the world, I feel that it is important to offer a few lines of explanation, as well as a brief sketch or synopsis of the events that led to my discovery of the manuscript relating the incredible adventures of this writer.

As a naturalist specializing in ornithology, I had long been attracted to the regions of the little known Antarctic as a rich field for my studies. Very largely, perhaps, my interest in Antarctic ornithology was due to the fact that I resided in New Bedford, a town famous in former years for the number of its whaling vessels, many of which sailed annually for the southern oceans in search of sea-elephant oil. From the officers of these vessels I obtained many specimens of birds' skins and eggs brought back by the obliging whalemen. Such specimens were, however, more or less unsatisfactory for scientific study, and I at last made up my mind to visit the Antarctic in person in order to observe and study that avifauna in its own habitat.

It thus happened that I secured passage upon a whaleship bound for the South Atlantic and South Indian oceans, and, after an uneventful voyage of several months, I found myself gazing from the bark's deck at the frowning mountain peaks of Kerguelen, or as it is also called, Desolation Island.

Here, in company with some ten of the bark's crew, I was landed, and, having been amply supplied with provisions, tools and implements of the whalemen's trade, we saw the vessel sail away for South Georgia, there to land other parties, which, like our own, would remain upon the barren bits of land until the bark's return the following year.

I need not enter into a description of the wonderful fauna and flora of the island, nor need I dilate upon the rare and interesting specimens which rewarded my daily tramps over the bare basaltic hills or through the thick scrub and rank grass of the valleys, although to me those days were filled with fascination and all the naturalist's enthusiasm at treading new fields of study.

Suffice it to state that on one misty morning, having penetrated far into the interior of the island in search of a new rookery of albatross, I was attracted by the strange behavior of one of these great birds.

He appeared unable to rise from the ground, although he repeatedly spread his immense wings and flapped upward for a few inches. But each time he fell back and struggled awkwardly about upon the earth.

My nearer approach disclosed the fact that the bird's legs was entangled in some object among the rocks, and, walking to within a few yards of the albatross, I was surprised to find that a cord or line was attached to the bird's leg, while the other extremity of the cord was fastened to an object that glittered curiously in the light.

Consumed with curiosity, for I knew that no human beings had recently visited the spot, I cautiously approached the albatross, and, throwing my coat over its head, I stooped and endeavored to disengage the line from the bird's leg. I found however, that the cord, which was of a most unusual metallic lustre, was spliced or woven about the leg.

I therefore drew my sailor's sheath knife and strove to cut the line which was scarcely larger than twine. Imagine if you can my surprise when the keen-edged blade slipped uselessly along the cord as though the knife had been of wood and the line of steel!

Judging that the affair was some form of wire rope, I then placed it across a small rock and hammered it with another stone, but without avail. Bending it rapidly back and forth was equally futile, and I therefore turned my attention to the object to which the cord was attached, and which appeared to be a thin glass cylinder some two inches in diameter and approximately six inches in length. Through the crystal I could discern a roll of some material resembling paper, and, feeling sure that this was a message of some sort, I struck the bottle-like receptacle a smart blow with a bit of rock. I remember that, even as I did so, I was mentally wondering how such a fragile receptacle had escaped annihilation during the rough usage to which it must have been subjected by its winged carrier, but even this vague thought did not prepare me for the result of my blow. Indeed, I cannot adequately transcribe my utter amazement as the stone rebounded from the glass container without leaving so much as a scratch or a crack upon the surface!

I was in fact, absolutely dumfounded. Eagerly I stooped, and examinined the strange object more closely and minutely. I discovered a small catch or button near one end of the cylinder, and as I pressed upon this, the cord was suddenly released.

With the cylinder now in my possession I gave no further heed to the albatross, which immediately flew off, a most regrettable incident as he carried with him the remarkable ligature which, had I secured it, would have proved of inestimable scientific value. But my attention was focussed completely upon the container which I found was remarkably light, about the weight of aluminum, I judged. But, despite its apparently fragile character I could not succeed in either breaking or denting the remarkable material, try as I might.

My curiosity was now at fever heat, for I knew of a certainty that no such material was known to civilized man, and that any message or communication enclosed within it must be of the utmost importance and interest. In order to examine it more closely I opened my pocket lens and commenced most carefully and painstakingly to go over the smooth surface of the astonishing receptacle.

In so doing I advertently brought a point of light to a focus upon the cylinder. All that had gone before was as nothing to the astounding result of this accidental procedure. Instantly the material commenced to melt and run like wax! In a few brief moments I had melted a space completely encircling the cylinder, and, from the aperture thus made I drew forth the roll of manuscript—for such the contents proved to be, and, spreading the pages commenced to read the incredible story written thereon. Certain passages, names and references assured me that the story was no fiction nor the work of a disordered mind, for many of the incidents mentioned as well as names referred to, were familiar

to me. I clearly remembered the departure of the bark *Endeavor*, her failure to return, and the various newspaper accounts of her disappearance, with the published lists of her personnel. These facts, as I have stated, would alone have convinced me even had I not felt assured, from the character of the receptacle chosen to hold the manuscript, that the tale was true, for the material could not have been obtained or prepared in any known country or by any known race of men.

Deeply have I regretted, since that time, the fact that my engrossment with the manuscript swept all thoughts of the cylinder from my mind. I had carelessly dropped it as I secured the contents, and when, having read and reread the astounding tale from beginning to end, I looked for the receptacle, it could not be found. My closest and most painstaking search failed to reveal it. Whether it had rolled into some crevice or hole in the volcanic rock or whether some curious albatross, attracted by the glitter of the cylinder, had surreptitiously approached and swallowed it, I shall never know.

But even without the cylinder and its attendant cord as corroborative evidence as to the truth of the story I so strangely obtained, the tale itself is so manifestly fact, and is of such incalculable value to the world that I have not the slightest hesitation in publishing it.

The manuscript, quite unaltered, is reproduced in the following pages, and my readers may judge for themselves as to the veracity of the author and the importance of its revelations which are now made public for the first time. The narrative, written legibly in some dark colored medium upon a peculiar parchment-like and exceedingly tough though light material, covered many sheets, and was as follows:

BEYOND THE POLE

By A. HYATT VERILL

HERE is one of the most gripping stories that it has ever been our good fortune to read. At the same time, it is one of the best scientifiction works of the modern school that we have lately seen. It is easily the best scientifiction story of this year.

The author, in choosing a civilization of lobster-like people, should not be accused of sketching an impossibility. Indeed, it is impossible to say, at this moment, in what form an intelligent reasoning creature might or might not exist. Just because we have never met a reasoning creature different from a human being tells nothing, and we certainly should not be so arrogant as to think that intelligence, as we know it, combined with reasoning, exists solely in the human type.

So far we have not been able to penetrate the secrets of ant life, or of the bee life, despite our so-called "intelligence," so we should not judge too harshly what is and what is not possible, when it comes to reasoning intelligence.

In nature we know that everything is repeated—not only once, but thousands of times. Why should reasoning intelligence be represented only in one species?

At any rate, we know that somehow you will feel that "Beyond the Pole" is a real story, where real facts are given to you for what they are worth. It is an engrossing story that cannot fail to grip you from start to finish.

TO whosoever finds this message:—I entreat that you will read, and after reading will either notify the relatives and friends of myself and my comrades of the crew of the bark *Endeavor* of New Bedford, in the State of Massachusetts, U. S. A., of the fate of that vessel and her men, or failing in this, will give this writing to some reliable newspaper in order that it may be published for the benefit and peace of mind of all who have an interest in the fate of the bark which set sail from New Bedford on the fourteenth day of August, 1917.

My name is Franklin Bishop and I was born and resided at Fairhaven, Mass., across the harbor from New Bedford. For many years I followed the sea as a whaleman, until in 1917 I shipped as first mate on the bark *Endeavor*, Captain Ranklin, bound for the South Shetland Islands in search of sea-elephant oil, the price of oil having greatly increased owing to the war. The bark carried a crew of sixteen men, six of whom were Portugese boat-steerers shipped at Funchal.

I cannot now recall the names or homes of the crew, if indeed I ever knew them, for a large number were greenies—human derelicts, and were known aboard ship only by their Christian or their nicknames. The skipper was George Rankin of New London, Ct. The second mate was Jacob Marten of Noank, Ct. Chester of Mystic, Ct., and the carpenter was a huge, raw boned Scandinavian named Olaf Johnson. The cooper was Nicholas But the names matter little, for I have no doubt that even after six years the bark's owners or the New Bedford shipping lists of 1917 can supply the names of all hands with the exception of the Portuguese, and I mention the above merely to prove the truth of my tale and to induce whoever finds it to make known the fate of the bark and of her crew."*

Our voyage, after leaving Funchal, was pleasant and with favorable winds and good weather we made a quick run until south of Tristan da Cunha when we ran into heavy weather with a northeast gale that forced us to shorten sail to almost bare poles. Even then the old bark wallowed heavily and made such bad weather of the sharp irregular seas that we at last were forced to heave to and even to use oil over the bows. This made the ship ride easier but our drift was tremendous and when, on the fifth day, we managed to take sights we found ourselves far off our course and in latitude about 45° South and longitude 11° west. The exact figures I do not remember.

We had scarcely made sail and gotten on our course when another and even harder gale bore down upon us from the northwest, and under bare poles we scudded before it for sixty hours, when,

*See footnote on next page.

by the hardest work, we managed to set a patch of sail and heaved the bark to.

Hour after hour the storm howled through the rigging, while with aching backs and straining arms we toiled at the pumps day and night.

Gradually the wind died down and intense cold followed, with murky, leaden skies and occasional squalls of snow, while between these puffs the wind fell flat and we drifted helplessly about at the will of the strong and unknown currents of the region. For five long, weary days we drifted, the sky becoming more and more sullen, and with no gleam of sunlight to enable us to make an observation.

On the sixth day, long, oily rollers came running in from the west with a weight that told of wind to follow, and sails were close reefed in readiness for the expected blow. At last, upon the horizon, we saw a streak of white, gleaming against the inky murk, and hardly had we grasped rails and rigging when the hurricane and blinding sleet and snow struck us. Over the old bark went until it seemed as if her yards would trip in the mountainous seas that rushed past her bulwarks. Then gradually she righted, and bearing off before the wind, tore through the huge seas like a mad thing. For ten hours the gale screeched and howled with undiminished fury and every effort to bring the bark into the wind was useless. Moreover the hail and snow was so thick that we could see barely a cable's length from the ship, while rigging and spars were loaded with tons of ice and to handle ropes was like hauling on steel bars. Then, suddenly from aloft, came the piercing cry "Ice ahead! Port your helm! For God's sake, hard a port!"

Springing to the wheel I threw all my weight upon it, but even with the two men already there, we were unable to swing the bark half a point and a second later, with a grinding crash, we struck the berg.

So great was the shock that all hands were thrown flat upon the deck, and with a splintering roar, the fore- and mainmasts went over the side, dragging the port bulwarks with them and staving a gaping hole in the bark's side as the jagged butts lurched up on the next sea.

Instantly all was confusion. The Portugese rushed to the boats, only to find that all but two were staved in, and tried to cut away the falls. Luckily the ropes were so sheathed in ice that for a moment they could not lower the boats and in this brief space of time the captain and myself, with the other officers, managed to drive the crazed fellows from the boats and to restore some sort of order.

Provisions and water were thrown into the boats, but the bark was settling so rapidly that before the craft were half provisioned Captain Rankin decided it would be certain death to wait longer. Accordingly the boats were lowered away at once, but as I looked at the huge seas and felt the sweep of the icy gale I turned back and chose to risk going down with the ship rather than add my weight to the overburdened boats that I judged would scarcely live an hour in the terrific welter of sea and wind.

In this decision I was joined by Olaf, the carpenter, and standing upon the rapidly sinking hulk we saw the two tiny whaleboats shove off and disappear in the sleet and snow to leeward. We momentarily expected the bark to sink beneath us and our only hope was that we might have time to build some sort of makeshift raft before the vessel went down. With this idea we at once commenced to gather what materials we could. But long before we had secured even a small part of what we required the bark had settled until the deck was only a few inches above the water. Then suddenly she lurched to port, rolled over on her beam ends and with a slight shudder remained motionless except for a slight rising and falling on the waves. For a moment we were amazed and puzzled and could not understand the matter, for I knew hundreds of fathoms of water lay under our keel. Presently, however, we came to grasp the situation, Evidently the berg on which we struck projected far under water, like a huge shelf, and our ship, passing over this before she struck, had now settled until she rested on the submerged ice shelf. For the time we were safe and although the bark rested in such a slanting position that we were obliged to crawl rather than walk the decks, yet we thanked God that we were there, instead of tossing about in small boats at the mercy of the tempest.

As nothing was to be gained by remaining on deck we entered the cabin and secured food and drink and succeeded in belaying the cabin stove so that we could light a fire, which proved most grateful to our chilled and numbed bodies. Here we sat and smoked for uncounted hours, while dimly the sound of storm and waves came to us or the grating of the bark's keel upon the ice beneath gave us momentary frights. Gradually the storm waned and the waves broke less heavily against our crippled ship. Towards daybreak we both fell asleep and did not awaken until aroused by the cold which became terrific as the fire died down. We kindled a new fire, and wrapping ourselves in heavy coats and oilskins, went on deck. The sun was shining brightly close to the horizon, but as far as eye could see there was nothing but gleaming ice floes broken by narrow, open lanes of dark water and lofty bergs. By watching certain spots we soon found that we were drifting rapidly southward and I went below to secure my sextant and take an observation. To my chagrin I found that the captain had taken the instruments with him and we were without means to learn our position except by guess-work. By careful calculation of our drift, and assuming that we had been drifting at the same speed and in the same direction since striking the ice, and allowing for our progress since taking the last observation, I decided that our latitude and

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(*Foot note by Dr. Lyman)
The following is a clipping from the New Bedford "Mercury" of August 14th, 1917: "Sailed: Bark "Endeavor", Rankin, for Gough, South Georgia and South Shetland Islands via Funchal. It is with pleasure that we note the sailing of the old Whaleship "Endeavor". This is the first of New Bedford's once great fleet of whalers to set sail for the South Atlantic in many years, and we trust that it signifies an awakening of the long dormant industry which once made the name of New Bedford familiar in every corner of the world. It is a direct outcome of the Great War and the consequent advance in the price of oil, and while the latter may be and no doubt is only temporary, our still serviceable old ships may yet reap golden harvests while high prices continue. The "Endeavor's" officers are well known and experienced men and we wish them and the owners every success and a 'greasy v'yage'. The "Endeavor's" officers are as follows: Captain, George Rankin of New London. First mate, Frank Bishop, Fairhaven. Second, Jacob Marten, Noank. Cooper, Nicholas Chester, Mystic. Carpenter and blacksmith, Olaf Johnson, Christiana, Sweden. Cook, Wm. Outerbridge, Hamilton, Bermuda. Boatsteerers, Jake Hildebrand, Nantucket. Henry Fogarty, Marthas Vineyard. Michael Mendora, Cape Verde Island."—A. E. L.

longitude must be about 70° south and 10° east. The cold was now so intense that we descended to the cabin, only occasionally venturing on deck to meet with the same weary, drifting, broken ice. Our case seemed hopeless indeed, for we well knew that we were far beyond the tracks of any ships and that unless some miracle occurred we were doomed to spend the rest of our days upon the helpless wreck, to perish miserably of starvation. With such thoughts we turned in at night and for six days our existence was but a repetition of the first.

On the morning of the seventh day we were startled by a roaring, grinding noise and the sudden violent lurching of the bark. Rushing on deck and fearing the worst, we were thunderstruck to behold —barely a cable's length away—a rocky, ice-capped shore, behind which rose lofty mountains with their summits hidden in clouds. Much to our surprise also we found that the weather had greatly moderated and several big mollymokes were wheeling about the ship while seals and sea-leopards basked on the rocks above the surf. Our ice cradle prevented the bark taking the ground, but in the course of a few moments we managed to scramble over the intervening broken ice and soon stepped upon the shingle. Then, with ropes and hawsers, we succeeded in making our wreck fast to the shore. We were now reasonably sure that the ship would not go adrift, and even if a storm came up and forced us to desert our quarters on board, we could no doubt salvage enough from the wreck to build some manner of craft in which to make our escape from this forbidding and uncharted land.

During the next two or three weeks we busied ourselves carrying ashore fuel and provisions and in constructing a little hut or shelter in which to store the goods or to seek refuge in case of disaster to the bark.

There was no lack of fresh meat, for penguins, albatross, mollymokes and Cape pigeons were thick. Also, we laid in a fine supply of seal skins and oil in preparation for the long and dreary winter which we knew we should be forced to face, for we had no intentions of trusting ourselves to any frail craft we might be able to build until all chances of whaleships reaching us had passed with the summer. Although this work kept us busy and left us little time to think of our plight, yet often, during meals or when done with the day's work, we talked over the probable fates of our comrades and were grateful at our own salvation, even in such an inhospitable land.*

*(Foot note by Dr. Lyman)
"Evidently Mr. Bishop did not consider the possibility of any member of the bark's crew having reached land or safety. The following is a clipping from the "New Bedford Mercury" of July 2d, 1919:
'The schooner Petrel, Archibald, arrived yesterday with 600 bbls. of sea-elephant oil; 300 seal skins; 200 bbls. sperm oil; 15 casks spermaceti and 16 lbs. ambergris from the South Atlantic and South Indian oceans. Captain Archibald brought with him the survivors of the ill fated bark "Endeavor" of this port which sailed for the Antarctic on August 14th, 1917. The "Endeavor" struck a berg and foundered near the Bouvets Islands after being driven far off her course by a series of gales. The survivors who have both our heartiest sympathies and our most sincere congratulations, are are follows: Jacob Marten, Noank. Nicholas Chester, Mystic. Michael Mendoza, Cape Verde Island. Henry Fogarty, Marthas Vineyard. Jose Rodriguez, Funchal. Mr. Marten, the second mate of the "Endeavor," states that only two boats were lowered, the others having been stove by falling spars. The other boat contained Captain Rankin and eight men and was lost to sight a few moments after leaving the bark's side. Franklin Bishop, the first mate, and Olaf Johnson, the carpenter, refused to leave the vessel and trust to the boats. After terrible hardships Mr. Marten's boat reached the Bouvets and after three months on those desolate rocks the men were picked up by the Petrel. There can be little doubt that those in the Captain's boat, as well as Mr. Bishop and the carpenter, perished.'"—A. E. L.

CHAPTER II.

As winter approached, however, Olaf became very sullen and morose, often talking to himself and wandering about the rocks, gesticulating and acting strangely.

I became afraid that the poor fellow would lose his mind completely, and, as on many occasions he turned upon me savagely, I was constantly on the alert to protect myself. He had been a wonderful help, for his skill with tools had enabled us to build a comfortable house and without him I would have fared badly indeed.

It was several months after landing that in one of his fits of wandering he fell among slippery rocks and broke his thigh. I did not find him until several hours after the accident, and twixt loss of blood and the pain and the piercing cold, he was past all human help and quite unconscious.

I carried him to the hut and did all in my power for my suffering shipmate, but it was useless. Early the following morning he died, and with heavy heart at the loss of my only companion, I carried his body to a crevice in the hillside and covered it well with stones and gravel, and over it placed a small wooden cross on which I carved his name and the date of his death.

I now became most despondent, for I knew that alone I could never hope to complete the boat we had been working on, and that even if that were possible I would be powerless to handle or navigate it. I could see nothing but the endless winter and utter loneliness before me, with ultimate death through accident or madness, unless by some remote chance a sail hove in sight.

In my calmer moments I held to this slender hope and tried to conjure up all the tales I had heard of castaways living for years alone and yet being rescued in the end. I had little fear of meeting with an accident as long as I kept my mind, and I realized that my greatest danger lay in going mad as Olaf had done. To avoid this as much as possible and to prevent my thoughts from dwelling on my plight, I commenced taking long trips across the hills in search of game, carrying a supply of ammunition and a haversack filled with biscuit or dried meat. On one of these tramps I had wandered several miles from the hut and had reached the summit of a good sized hill, from which I had a wide view of the sea. Far down the shore I noticed some object about which great flocks of sea fowl were gathering, and thinking it a stranded whale or sea elephant, I turned my steps towards the spot. As I rounded a point of rocks and came within plain sight of the object, I almost dropped in my tracks from sheer amazement. Upon the beach before me was a ship's boat!

I broke into a run, and panting, reached the craft from which hundreds of mollymokes and other birds rose screaming. Gaining the boat's side I peered within and recoiled in horror. Stretched upon the thwarts and bottom were the bodies of six men, their faces torn and mutilated by the sea birds. But even in their ghastly state I knew them for Captain Rankin and my former shipmates of the *Endeavor*. I reeled away, for the sight was sickening and stunning, and seized with insane and unreasoning fright, I dropped my gun and dashed off

across the rocks and hills, striving with might and main to get as far from the gruesome boat as possible.

At last I dropped from sheer exhaustion among the rocks, but even then the shock was so great that I hid my face and screamed and raved like a madman until consciousness left me.

How long I remained in that condition I cannot say, for when at last I awoke to a knowledge of my surroundings, I found myself wandering about amid thick and thorny scrub on a steep hillside I had never seen before. I was ravenously hungry and thrust my hand into my haversack in search of food, only to find it empty save for a few crumbs of ship's bread. Seating myself on a nearby rock I munched these eagerly and tried to collect my thoughts and reason. I soon came to the conclusion that I had been delirious for a long time, and during my period of temporary madness, had wandered far, for my haversack had been full when I first sighted the boat and was now empty, and I reasoned that I must have devoured my food during my unconscious wanderings. My watch had stopped, but this mattered little, as for months I had been able merely to guess at the time. A search of my pockets failed to reveal my compass but I felt this was no great loss at the time, for I had no doubt that, by climbing a neighboring hill, I could make out the sea and so find my way back to the hut, although I confess that the mere thought of again approaching the ghastly remains of my shipmates filled me with most awful dread and caused me to shudder violently.

My tongue and throat were parched and dry and the hard crumbs of biscuit added to my thirst, so I at once commenced to push my way up the hillside through the shrubbery. As I reached the top and looked about, no gleaming bit of sea greeted my eyes. On every side stretched rolling, round-topped hills, each and all clothed in dull, brownish-gray scrub, save just behind me, where the more distant landscape was hidden from view by a higher range of small mountains. Although my thirst was now unbearable yet I knew that my one hope of finding my way was to ascend the higher hill, and with sinking heart and lagging footsteps, I started for them. Slowly and painfully I climbed their rough and rocky slopes, stopping often to rest and regain my failing breath, but at last I stood upon their crest and gazed anxiously about the horizon. For a moment my head swam and a mist floated before my eyes. Then my vision cleared and I saw before me a long, sloping hillside covered with scattered shrubs, while below and stretching far towards the horizon, was a green and pleasant valley on whose farther edge rose high and rugged mountains misty with distance. But though no water gladdened my eyes, yet near at hand I saw a number of great birds resembling penguins, and towards these I rapidly made my way. They were stupid and fearless and in a moment I had killed the first one I reached and greedily drank its rick warm blood. This refreshed me greatly, but feeling still hungry, I gathered a quantity of eggs, which I ate raw, and feeling drowsy made my way to a sheltered nook among the rocks and fell into a deep and dreamless sleep.

I awoke feeling strong but half famished, and at once fell to on the helpless birds and their eggs. I now considered my next step and as there evidently was nothing to be gained by retracing my way I decided to travel towards the valley where I judged perhaps water might be found, for although the blood and raw eggs had somewhat quenched my thirst, yet the desire for water was overpowering. As I did not know if I would find more birds farther on, I laid in a good supply of flesh and eggs, and as I noticed that my shoes were almost worn out, I wrapped birds' skins about my feet, binding them in place with strips of the skin.

I now noticed that these birds were not penguins, as I had at first thought, nor in fact anything like any birds I had even before seen. I judged therefore that I was far from the coast, but I was wholly without means of ascertaining the direction of the sea or my position, for I had seen nothing of the sun since finding the boat, although the days were bright enough. As I thought on this its strangeness came to me and I also marveled that I was not suffering from the cold. The more I thought of these matters the more I wondered, for now that I came to think of it, the weather was quite warm and I had seen no snow or ice, even among the crevices of the rocks. But I had other things to occupy my attention, for my thirst for water and my desire to escape from my surroundings filled my head to the exclusion of all less pressing matters, as for hour after hour I tramped on across the valley. From the hilltop it had appeared clothed in soft grass, but when I reached it I found to my sorrow that the vegetation was thorny, pointed-leaf shrubs whose tangled branches formed an almost impenetrable jungle which made my progress painful and slow beyond belief. I soon lost all sense of time or direction, but toiled on towards the distant mountains, eating the birds' flesh and eggs when hungry and at last sinking down to sleep when my tired and torn flesh refused to carry me farther on my way. Only by looking at the hills behind me could I see that I had made any progress towards the mountains, which seemed as distant as ever. But gradually the hills grew dim in the distance, while ahead, the mountains became more distinct and great seams and patches of vegetation appeared upon their slopes. It was well for me that I had laid in a supply of meat and eggs, for I saw no sign of life on the dreary plain, except one great beast that appeared like a gigantic lizard or iguana. In fact, so monstrous was the creature, that I feared my brain had gone adrift again and that it was but a vision of delirium. The beast appeared more afraid of me than I of him, however, and so little interest did I have in anything save the desire for water and to reach the farther side of the valley that I doubt if I would have turned aside or would have fled even though the devil himself had confronted me. Certain it is that the presence of this huge creature—I would say he was forty feet in length—did not prevent me from dropping off to sleep as usual that night.

At last my provisions became perilously low and when finally I reached the bases of the mountains I was reduced to two eggs, while my makeshift boots were gone entirely and my garments were merely a few dirty rags and shreds. To climb those rugged mountains seemed utterly beyond my power, but I noticed a sort of cut or ravine a half mile or so dis-

tant, and thinking this might be a pass through the mountains, I dragged myself toward it. It was a deep fissure and extended far up the mountain side and while it made the climb a bit easier I soon found that the task was far greater than I had expected, and only by the utmost efforts could I force my way upward. But some unknown force or instinct seemed to drag me on, and even when my last egg had been devoured I did not despair, but struggled and found my way, foot by foot, over the rocks and boulders and through patches of low scrub, until almost fainting from hunger and thirst, I came to another colony of the strange birds. On these I feasted until satisfied, and while resting and tying more of the bird-skins on my bruised and swollen feet, I found time to give some thought to my surroundings.

I had often heard of the theory of a vast Antarctic continent, and although I of course knew that Shackleton had found the South Pole, still I was now convinced that I had passed the pole and was on this unknown land.

But the fact that the weather was warm puzzled me immensely, while quite beyond my understanding was the fact that I had seen no glimpse of the sun on my long tramp across the plain. No theory, however wild and impossible, would account for this, for it was not dark but as bright as any Antarctic day, and neither could I understand how, especially without the sun, I could feel comfortably warm. At last, giving up the puzzle in despair, I gathered up my load of birds and eggs and once more started on.

And here it may be well to explain why I was able to think upon such matters, which are usually beyond the mind of a sailor, and how, as will be seen later, I happened to have a knowledge of many matters, such as science, mechanics and similar things of which the sailor or whaleman, as a rule, knows nothing. For several years I had been an officer on one of the ships of the United States Fish Commission, and from the scientists engaged in deep sea research I had learned a great deal about natural history which interested me always, and learning for the first time that specimens of animal life, minerals and plants had a cash value, I secured a commission from one of the museums to collect specimens on my whaling voyages to distant parts of the world. This led me to study works on science, and through long Arctic nights, I filled my brain with all manner of knowledge relating to geology, zoölogy, botany and other similar matters.

Also, I had always been fond of mechanics, and as the whaling industry waned and the demand for sailors decreased in the merchant service, I bent my energies to acquiring a knowledge of machinery so that I might secure a berth on some steam or motor-propelled craft. In doing this I became absorbed in the matter and found vast interest in reading all manner of books and magazines treating of the latest inventions and discoveries in the mechanical world. Of course I had little practical knowledge of these things, but the theories were fixed in my mind, and as it proved later, were of great value to me.

But to resume my narrative. Long and weary as my tramp across the plain had been, tenfold worse was the never ending upward climb towards the cloud-piercing summits of the mountains. My days were measured only by my waking moments, for the light never ceased, and my labor was only marked by long periods of panting, heartbreaking toil and periods of deep sleep, and while, to keep some sort of track of the hours, I had started my watch, yet this gave me no real time, but merely served to let my know how long I slept and how long I toiled upwards. Five days of this labor had again worn my makeshift footgear to pieces and had reduced my provisions to my last egg, when I reached the summit of the mountains, and falling exhausted upon the bare and wind-swept rocks, looked down upon the farther side.

At my first glance my heart gave a great throb of joy and I thanked heaven that I had been led on to the summit. Spreading from the base of the mountains was a wide level plain covered with rich and verdant green, while far away, gleaming like silver in the bright light, stretched a vast expanse of water.

Forgetting my sore, torn feet and my utter exhaustion, I rose and dashed forward down the slope. Stumbling over boulders, tripped by vines and shrubs, falling, sliding and scrambling, I reached the bottom in a few hours and dashed into the luxuriant grass that rose higher than my head. Here my strength failed me, and falling upon the earth, I felt utterly unable to rise again.

Presently I heard a slight rustling sound in the grass near me, and glancing up, beheld a strange animal staring at me in wonder, but evidently without the least fear. Thinking only to secure something to eat I managed to stagger to my feet and started towards the animal. I had no weapon except my knife, but the beast stood his ground until I was within a few feet when, by a sudden spring, I reached his side, and driving my knife into his throat, brought him down. In my famished state his blood and raw, warm meat were as welcome as the daintiest food, and having satisfied myself, I fell asleep beside his partially devoured carcass.

Several hours later I awoke, feeling much stronger, and looked more closely at the beast whose fortunate appearance had saved my life. I found him to be a sort of huge rat or mouse—although I had at first mistaken him for a small deer—and my stomach turned a bit at the thought that I had actually eaten his flesh. I now became conscious of a peculiar quality in the air that I had not noticed before. At first I was puzzled to account for it, but gradually I realized that the light had become intensely blue instead of white or yellow. It was like looking through a blue-tinted glass, and for the first time I noticed that my hands and knife and even the face of my watch, appeared bluish and strange. My longing for water, however, was too great to allow me to give much thought to the matter and turning from the dead animal—for hungry as I was I could not force myself to eat more of him—I started on in the direction of the water I had seen from the mountain top. The grass grew close and was very dry and gave off a dusty, choking material or pollen which filled my eyes, nose and mouth and each moment increased my thirst and dried and blistered my aching, parched throat. But gradually the grass became thinner and now and then I caught glimpses of small creatures and birds that fled be-

fore me, while the ground under my feet became less dry and parched, until presently, the damp, sweet smell of water reached me. A moment later I burst through the last of the grass and saw before me a sandy beach lapped by tiny waves whose sound was the most welcome thing I had ever heard. Rushing across the beach, I threw myself face down at the water's edge with a sickening fear that the water might be salt. But my first taste reassured me, and burying my face and hands in the waves, I drank until I felt sick and nauseated, when, crawling up the beach on all fours, I drew myself into the shelter of the grass and lost consciousness.

CHAPTER 3.

SLOWLY I opened my eyes and as I did so I screamed aloud with terror and wonder. Standing over me was a fearsome, terrible creature. That he was not a man I knew at my first glance, and yet, there was something that resembled a man about him, but so terribly monstrous, weird and incredible, so utterly inhuman, that I felt sure I must be dreaming or out of my senses. He or it was fully eight feet in height, standing on two legs like a man, and seemingly clad from head to foot in some soft, downy material that glistened with a thousand colors, like the throat of a humming bird or the tints on a soap bubble. Above the shoulders was a large, elongated, pointed head with a wide mouth and a long, pointed snout. From the forehead projected long stalks or horns and on the tip of each of these was an unwinking, gleaming eye like the eyes of a crab. In place of eyebrows two long, slender, jointed, fleshy tentacles drooped down over the creature's shoulders, while the ears were long, soft and pendulous like those of a hound. There was no hair upon the head, but instead, a number of brilliant, shining scales or plates, lapping one over the other from the forehead to the nape of the neck.

No wonder I was horrified and startled at this apparition and as I gazed upon the thing and saw that it possessed three pairs of long, many-jointed arms, I shrieked again at the monstrosity of it. At my cry and my terrified actions, the creature raised one hand in a reassuring gesture and I was further horrified to see that in place of fingers the arm ended in a mass of delicate various-shaped appendages of several sizes, that reminded me of the soft legs on the belly of a crawfish or shrimp. I shrank away as far as possible, but the being seemed to smile, his stalked eyes drew back into his head and he uttered some strange sounds in a low, soft tone which I judge were words of greeting or reassurance, although to my ears they meant nothing.

Finding I did not respond—for I was still too dazed and frightened to utter a sound—the thing stooped and extended a small object towards me. It resembled a ship's biscuit in form and size and as I hesitated to take it the creature pointed to his own mouth and nodded, evidently meaning I was to eat it. I had no difficulty in grasping this meaning and famished as I was, rather hesitatingly took the object and greedily devoured it. In taste it was slightly sweet with a rather pleasant aromatic flavor and I at once signed my desire for more. My weird friend, for I now knew that despite his fearful appearance the creature was well disposed towards me, handed me two more of the biscuits and as he did so I had a chance to look more closely at his hands. They were truly remarkable. Each of the dozen or more finger-like digits was of a distinct form and size. Some were large, strong and blunt; others slender and pointed; others with pincer-like tips, while still others were divided at the extremities into several filaments almost as fine as hairs. Marvelous and repulsive as they seemed, yet I could not help realizing even then what wonderful work such hands might accomplish if they were controlled by intelligence and muscles as perfect as man's, and yet my wildest ideas of such things fell far short of the reality.

Seating himself, or I might say, sprawling himself, beside me, the thing watched me munch the biscuit and I in turn gazed at him with the utmost curiosity, as I had now partially overcome my dread. I now saw that what I had mistaken for clothing was in reality a growth upon the skin, a material something like wool and yet something like feathers. The feet, too, I found were as strange as the rest of the body or the hands, for in place of toes, they bore round-tipped digits covered with saucer-shaped suckers like those upon the tentacles of an octopus or squid.

Undoubted I was as great a marvel to him as he was to me, for I could see that his surprise at my appearance was tremendous. His long flexible feelers rose and fell about me—though not touching me for which I was thankful—his eyes turned and moved up and down as he looked me over from head to foot, and presently, realizing I no longer feared him, he extended one hand and very gently passed it over my clothing. I shuddered at the first touch, but as one of the appendages or fingers touched my flesh and I found it soft and warm and not cold or clammy as I had expected, my revulsion became less. Still the sensation of being handled or touched by the horribly formed thing was creepy and I had to use all my will to avoid drawing back. Evidently he was greatly surprised at the result of his examination and gazed at me more intently than ever, meanwhile uttering low, strange words or sounds that reminded me of the purring of a cat with a little of the rasping, metallic sound of a cricket.

Presently, seeing I had eaten the last of the biscuits, the creature rose to his two hind feet, folded two other pairs of limbs under his body, and beckoning with the fourth pair, or as I might call them, his arms, made me understand that I was to follow him. Filled with curiosity to know what wonders lay before me, and feeling sure the creature was friendly and peaceable, I also rose and to my amazement found that all my health and strength had returned in a most miraculous manner. I was as refreshed, light hearted and free from aches, soreness or pain as ever in my life and as I walked with springy, buoyant steps after the weird being my mind was filled with wonder. Surely, I thought, the three small biscuits could not have stayed my ravenous appetite and given me such strength, and yet there was no other way to account for it. But whatever the reason, my troubles were over for the present. I had water in plenty before me, the creature leading the way

across the beach could provide food, and whatever the future might hold or wherever I might be, I would not die of thirst or starvation, while the incredible giant was friendly and apparently wished to help me.

I had no doubt that he was leading me to some house or settlement, and I was filled with curiosity to see what manner of creatures dwelt in this strange land. That they would be most interesting I felt sure, for I knew that, hitherto, the Antarctic had been thought uninhabited by man, and I wondered if they would resemble Eskimos, Indians or South Sea Islanders. That they should have domesticated such strangely weird creatures as the being who was guiding me, proved not only that they were intelligent, but that I might expect other and perhaps even greater surprises, while the fact that this monstrosity was so kindly and well disposed assured me that his masters would treat me with consideration. It was all very dream-like, and had it not been for my ragged garments, my thorn-torn and bruised flesh and my sore feet I should have felt sure that it was all a figment of my overwrought brain, for it was almost too incredible to be true. I had set out from the desolate, forbidding shores of the Antarctic within a few degrees of the South Pole, and here I was in a land as mild and pleasant as New England in June; the sea—or what I took to be the sea—was fresh pure water; the brilliant sunshine, which should not have existed at all in this spot, was pale blue instead of white; and before me strode a creature such as no mortal man had ever seen save in some nightmare or the delirium of fever or drink; while to me, at the time, the most incredible thing of all was the fact that after eating three small, dry biscuits I had regained all my strength and felt as fresh—with the exception of my blistered feet—as ever in my life.

We had walked along the beach for some time, and I was beginning to wonder how much farther we must travel, when we rounded a bend and I saw a peculiar object resting on the sand a few yards ahead of us. It was about fifty feet in length, about ten feet in diameter, cylindrical and with pointed ends, resembling in a way a gigantic cigar. In the bluish light it shone with the brilliant lustre of metal, but with a peculiar purplish sheen that was unlike any metal I had ever seen. As we approached this object, I halted in my tracks with gaping mouth and staring, incredulous eyes. A door had opened in the affair, and from the aperture, two more of the weirdly horrible looking creatures had appeared. In every detail they were exactly like my guide, except that one was much smaller and was covered with a pale, pinkish coat of down or feathers, or whatever the material might be called. Instantly, I was aware of a peculiar, vibrating, humming sound and noticed that my companion's feelers or antennae had risen erect above his head and were moving slowly, gracefully back and forth, as were the feelers of the two other creatures; but no word or sound that could be thought speech issued from any of the three.

A moment later we were beside the great, cylindrical object and the two beings who had been within it were gazing at me with the greatest wonder and interest. Their stalked eyes were moving this way and that, studying me from head to foot; their feelers were vibrating with excitement; their lop-ears were waving like the ears of an elephant, and presently, with queer, low sounds from their lips, they stretched out their jointed limbs and rather hesitatingly and cautiously touched my garments with their many digited hands or feet, whichever they might be called.

I was, I admit, most uneasy and not a little frightened and had a peculiar sense of repulsion as the creatures approached close to me and their tentacles played about my face and their soft finger-like extremities caressed my tattered clothing. But I knew that for the present at least I had no real cause for alarm, for they seemed really gentle creatures. But if my readers—provided this manuscript ever finds a reader—can imagine standing beside three immense crayfish larger than any giant of a dime museum, they can perhaps, in a measure, realize the sensations that went over me.

Even so I found myself wondering if the huge cylinder before me was the dwelling of these weird things, if it was a sort of shell-like house, and if the three were the only denizens of this unknown land, or if there were more of their kind. But I instantly dismissed the thought. They were merely strangely developed, remarkably intelligent beasts and it was inconceivable that they should have constructed the metallic affair from which they had emerged. In fact, the presence of this convinced me that there were human beings not far distant and that the creatures beside me were merely guarding the metallic object and awaiting their master's return. Moreover, the fact that this huge, metal, cigar-like thing was there proved beyond doubt that the men who dwelt in the land were no primitive savages, but intelligent and civilized, although what the purpose of the thing was was quite beyond me. Possibly, I thought, it was some sort of boat—for it looked much like one of the floats to a metal life raft—perhaps a submarine; but there were no signs of rudders, fins, propellers or other external fittings on its smooth surface, and aside from the door or port from which the two creatures had emerged, no opening or aperture in the metal as far as I could see.

But I had little time for thought on such matters. Their first curiosity satisfied, my guide gestured for me to follow, and entered the big cylinder with the other two following in my footsteps. Scarcely knowing what to expect, I passed through the door and glanced about. I was in a long room or hallway illuminated by a strange luminous glow and an exclamation of the utmost amazement escaped my lips as I discovered that the walls of the cylinder were as transparent as glass. Standing there, I could see the beach, the stretch of water, the green fringe of grass and bushes, as clearly as though I were in the open air and yet from without, the interior of the contrivance had been utterly invisible.

This was astounding enough, but before I could fully appreciate the wonder of it, there were more bewildering matters to fill my brain. The interior held no machinery, the only fittings in sight being couch-like benches, rugs or carpets and an affair at one end which at first glance I took to be a buffet or bar, for it bore a number of shining metallic and glass-like utensils. Above and behind it was a

panel or rectangle covered with strange dials and instruments, and as we entered and the door closed behind us with a slight metallic clink, the creature who had first found me approached this buffet-like arrangement. Reaching out his arms, he moved certain things upon the panel, with his other limbs he touched the utensils on the piece of furniture before him. Instantly, there was a strange musical humming which rose swiftly to a whirring sound, like the muffled noise of machinery and glancing through the transparent sides of the cylinder, I was dumbfounded to see the beach and the water swiftly dropping from beneath us. For a moment I could not understand and then, with a shock at the discovery, I realized that we were mounting upward with incredible speed. Within the space of a few seconds we were several hundred feet above the beach and the next instant my bewildered senses grasped the fact that we were hurtling through the air like a bullet from a rifle.

Almost before I knew it the beach and the grassy plain beyond it were dim in the distance, the faintly outlined waves upon the water seemed to rush backward and yet there was not the least movement appreciable within the transparent cylinder, and although I could see the entire interior from where I stood, there was no sign of machinery, no hint of engines, of whirring wheels or shafts. It was absolutely impossible and incredible. Within a cigar-shaped cylinder, which even if made of aluminum would have weighed tons, I was being hurled through space by invisible means controlled by the indescribably strange creatures beside me.

I peered ahead, for I knew that we must be bound for some definite goal, and saw land rising rapidly into view upon the horizon. Each second it became clearer, a low shore backed by hills deliciously green and bathed in the blue light that flooded everything. And as the land grew rapidly more distinct, bright, shining dots appeared among the greenery and presently, above the water's edge, an immense town or city lay spread. At the speed at which we were traveling we would be there within fifteen minutes, and as I glanced to right and left, I saw a score of craft similar to the one I was in, all rushing through the air like monstrous, gleaming cannon shells. Like streaks of light they crossed our path above or below us; to right and left they passed. Some were tiny things scarcely ten feet in length; others gigantic affairs several hundred feet in length, but all moving noiselessly, with incredible speed, driven by some unseen, incomprehensible, terrific power. Below us, now, the water was dotted with the strange vessels, their shimmering hulls, if such I may call them, resting on the surface or skittering along slowly and leaving foamy wakes across the little waves. Then we were dropping, descending as lightly as a bit of thistle down, and almost under my feet I saw the outlying buildings of the town. So rapidly did we drop that at the time I had no chance to note the form or details of the buildings, except to see that they were of strange design and color, but even in our swift fall, in that space of a few seconds, I saw that the inhabitants, the beings who thronged the streets, were no humans, but one and all the same grotesque, monstrous creatures as those beside me.

CHAPTER 4.

SHOCKED as I was at this discovery I saw that our arrival had been noticed, and that from every side, hurrying down the streets, swarming out of buildings, the creatures were rushing in a close packed mass towards a clear, open space like a broad level field which I judged was our landing place. The next moment our strange airship was at rest, and filled with unreasoning dread, trembling at thought of facing that horde of monsters, I followed my guides or captors, which ever they were, through the door and stepped upon the firm earth once more. All about the borders of the field, which I now saw was covered with cradle-like structures like the one in which our craft rested, the stalk-eyed, misshapen beings had gathered, a maze of swaying, undulating antennae, of tall, pointed, scale-covered heads and irridescent bodies; but not one attempted to approach or to pass within the boundaries of the landing place.

Hardly had I noticed this, and wondered at it, when from one side a group of the monsters stepped out. At first glance they seemed no different from the others, but as they drew close I saw that they were of a totally different color, being a peculiar violet-blue, and that two pairs of their limbs or arms ended in enormous, vicious-looking claws or nippers like those of a lobster. Even as I noticed this they reached us and I shuddered as I thought of how easily the creatures could crush and tear me to bits with those fearful pincers with their serrated teeth.

But for the present the claws were at rest and closed and their owners made no hostile movement. Forming on either side of my guides and myself, they marched beside us, and before them the crowd fell back, leaving an open lane through which we passed.

Before us were buildings, and for the first time, I obtained a clear view of the structures and gaped, almost as astonished at their appearance as I had been at the monstrous forms of their owners. From high in air they had seemed low, massive structures with nothing particularly remarkable about them, but now, close at hand I saw that they were unlike anything I had ever seen, although in a vague way they reminded me of gigantic igloos. Windowless they rose like domes of dull-gray above the earth, the only apertures in their walls, dark, yawning, arched doorways towards one of which my guards were marching. As we entered the portal my passing glance showed me that the affairs were not of mud or clay as I had thought at first, but were constructed of small stones and pebbles cemented together with some hard tenacious material giving them the effect of being hewn from coarse pudding stone, or as I believe geologists call it, conglomerate rock.

The next instant we were within the entrance and were descending a steep incline. So sharp was the slope that the skin coverings on my feet slipped, my feet shot out from under me and with a startled cry I went sliding and rolling through the semi-darkness like a bale of cargo down a chute. How far I might have gone or where I might have brought up I cannot say, for with incredible agility, two of the monsters overtook me and with their

weird limbs—which made me shudder as they touched me—brought me to a halt and helped me to my feet.

Despite the confusion and my predicament I had noticed that the creatures, when in a hurry, ran along on all fours, or rather I might say on all eights, and I realized that the sucker-like disks on their feet enabled them to navigate the steep passage without the least danger of slipping.

No doubt my mishap seemed very amusing to the strange beings, but no sounds of merriment came from them and to this moment I have never heard anything that remotely resembled a laugh or chuckle issue from the mouths of the creatures.

The whole affair, yes, everything that had occurred since I had seen the castaway boat with the corpses of my dead shipmates, was so dreamlike, so nightmarish that, try as I might, I could not convince myself that I was awake and that the strange events were actually taking place and that the beings,—intelligent, reasoning, possessing powers and mechanical devices beyond anything dreamed of by man, and yet mere beasts or creatures of a lower order—really existed and were not the creations of a disordered or wandering mind. But my fall was very real and as the creatures aided me to rise and I ruefully rubbed my bruised and barked limbs I knew that the tumble at least was no delirium. Indeed, I think that my mishap was the most convincing thing that had occurred. It is really strange how little, unimportant, every day matters are often of so much greater importance in our lives than great events, and all that I had undergone had failed to impress me as much, or to bring so vividly to my mind, the marvelous situation in which I found myself as that tumble on the steep incline leading through the darkness to the interior of some subterranean chamber.

At the time, however, I had little opportunity to give much thought to such matters. Before me a dull light shone, and a moment later, we emerged from the passage and entered a huge, round chamber. Although, at my first sight of the place, I did not take in the details, it may be as well to describe it at this point of my narrative. The floor was smooth, white and seemed made of some luminous material; the walls glowed with dull light, and the high, domed ceiling appeared as if of glass with brilliant bluish light streaming through it.

About the walls was a low bench or shelf-like arrangement covered with what appeared to be cushions; scattered about were curiously shaped chairs or stools, and in the centre, was a sort of raised dais or platform on which were several more seats and a desk-like arrangement covered with dials and instruments, much like the affair I had already seem in the airship and by means of which the creatures handled the craft. Upon the bench about the walls, and seated on the other stools, were several dozen of the beings to whom I was now becoming accustomed. In a general way they were precisely like my guards and the creature I had first met upon the distant beach, but in details they were different. In fact, no two were exactly alike, although it was not until long afterward that I learned to distinguish the various differences, some of which were very minute. They were of all colors, from white to nearly black, although all had the same peculiar metallic sheen I had already noted, and all likewise possessed eight limbs, the long-stalked eyes and the antennae. Already I had been impressed with the striking resemblance the creatures bore to giant crawfish, but now, as I gazed about the huge chamber, I had the feeling that I was surrounded by huge crustaceans possessed of intelligent, reasoning brains. Possibly I cannot convey to my readers—if by the will of God this narrative ever reaches human beings—the weirdly impossible, dreamlike and in a way, horrible sensations that swept over me as I stared at the scaly heads, the slowly moving stalked eyes, the waving, undulating antennae and the eight jointed limbs of these beings and realized that here in this strange land beyond the South Pole evolution had proceeded in a very amazing and very different manner to that which had taken place in the world of men. Years before I had read, among my other books, a work by Darwin on evolution and the survival of the fittest. Although I had never fully accepted the idea that mankind had descended or ascended from some monkey-like ancestor, still I could understand how it might be possible, and I had been convinced that man, as well as other members of the animal kingdom, had developed from other more primitive forms. And now, as I stood within the illuminated chamber, it suddenly dawned upon my mind that the creatures among whom my lot had been cast actually proved Darwin's theory. Here before me and all about me were beings no whit less intelligent than human beings; creatures who had conquered space and time with incredible aircraft; beings who could converse without words and who, I later found, were far in advance of man, and yet who bore not the remotest resemblance to humans. To put the matter in a few words; just as men resemble highly developed and advanced apes, so these beings resembled crustaceans. If the human race had been evolved from some ape-like creature, then beyond the shadow of a doubt, these creatures had been evolved from some lobster-like ancestor. The discovery came to me as a shock. So accustomed are we to think that intelligent, reasoning, civilized beings must be moulded in human form that it rather dazed me to find that the mere form of body and limbs had nothing to do with it; that the mere chance that man's ancestors had been apes or ape-like had led to the physical appearance of human beings, and that, had some other form of life been the fittest to survive and had gone through ages of evolution, our world might have been peopled by insects, reptiles or any other creatures as progressive, intelligent and highly civilized as ourselves.

Here before me was the proof of this. Here evolution had proceeded from cold-blooded, spineless crustaceans, and the result was these shrimp-like giants, possessing powers beyond my own or those of mankind. Of course, at the time, the full significance of the matter did not come to me, but as time passed and I learned how immeasurably beyond man these creatures had advanced I became more and more convinced that the accident of the origin of the human race had been an unfortunate rather than a fortunate thing for the world and that, had we been evolved from ants, say, we would

have been much farther along the road to highest attainments.

But I am digressing. At the time I was really more impressed by the curious discoveries I made than by thoughts on evolution. One of the first things I noticed, and which oddly enough had quite escaped me hitherto, was the fact that the creatures possessed tails. These were broad, flat affairs composed of overlapping plates or scales and which usually remained folded like fans. This no doubt was the reason they had escaped my notice, for being of the same color and texture as the rest of the bodies, I had taken them for ornamental pendant affairs, portions of the garments which I had thought the things wore, for I had not yet discovered that the feather-like covering of their bodies was a natural growth.

Now, however, I saw that when seated the tails stuck stiffly out behind the creatures, or in some cases were curled around to one side, and that they moved to and fro, opening and shutting in a most fascinating manner. Some I noted also, were far larger than others, and, later, I learned to distinguish the males and females by the form and size of their tails.

Of course all this which has taken so much time to write down occupied but a few instants and my eyes, having swept about the chamber, turned to the dais in the center and the creatures who were seated upon it.

These were taller, more slender and more brilliant in color than the others. Their heads were higher, broader and rounder; their antennæ were longer and their eyes, borne on long stalks like the others; seemed to me to have a more intelligent expression, if indeed, such hard, cold, unwinking orbs were capable of expression of any sort.

By intuition I knew that they were leaders or rulers and that I was being brought before them, and somehow this almost human proceedure of being led by armed guards before a tribunal surrounded by a curious crowd struck me as both ludicrous and amazing.

That I was in danger never occurred to me. Possibly it was because I had been through so much that I was callous of danger, or perhaps it was because man instinctively looks down upon inferior races or creatures; but whatever the reason, although I was fully aware that I was at their mercy, I felt no fear but rather was filled with interest and curiosity as to what would occur. Indeed, I felt precisely as I have felt when, in dreams, I have been dragged before a court to be tried for my life on some ridiculous charge, and knowing I might be condemned to death, yet I felt no dread of the results, owing to a peculiar subconscious conviction that I would escape harm and would awaken before the actual execution took place.

Also, I was filled with a curiosity as to how the hearing was to be conducted, for while there was no doubt that the creatures could converse readily among themselves, their words, or whatever means they used, were inaudible to me, and when they uttered sounds, as they did at times, the almost metallic noises were uttely unintelligible.

But I had far underestimated the uncanny, incredible powers of the creatures. Suddenly I was aware, as one becomes aware of some unseen person gazing at one in a crowd, that I was being questioned. I cannot describe the sensation, cannot make it clear. There was no sound, nothing to tell me that my ears were receiving any message, and as a matter of fact they were not.

And yet my brains, or some unknown sense, was receiving a message, questions which, could they be put into word, might have been been expressed as "Who are you? Whence do you come? What is your purpose?"

Was I dreaming, losing my senses, going mad from my past hardships and my amazing adventures? And then, almost unconsciouly, I found myself replying to the inaudible queries. I was trying to explain how I had been shipwrecked, how I had wandered across the mountains and had come to this land, and that my only purpose was, if possible, to return to my own country.

And as I thus responded to the uncanny question entering my brain without audible sounds, I knew from the actions of the strange beings that my replies had been understood. Their antennæ waved and trembled excitedly. They turned their stalked eyes and gazed at one another and at myself, and they even uttered the queer metallic sounds which always denoted great excitement.

It had been astounding enough to discover that the creatures could make themselves understood by some occult, uncanny power; but to find that I could make my thoughts clear to them was almost beyond reason. How had it been accomplished? How was it possible for me, a totally different being from another world, to understand these strange creatures? And what was still more astonishing, more inexplicable yet, how had I been able to transfer my thoughts to their brains? Was it some weird, undreamed-of method of mental telepathy, hypnotism or what? Even if they possessed some power, some unknown means of making me understand them, I certainly had no such power. And yet I was convinced that I had made myself clear to them, or at my rate had managed to reply in some fashion to their queries.

And the next instant my belief was confirmed. Once more, in my brain, questions were being registered, questions as intelligible as though I had heard the words spoken in English. I was being asked about "my world," questioned as to details of my journey, as to whether there were more beings like myself and various other matters.

Almost before I realized it, I was replying and, as I could see by the manner of my strange hosts, my words were heard and understood. It is of no use to describe at length the entire interview that followed or to repeat it word for word. It is enough for my purpose to state that my story was as unbelievable and as impossible to them as they and their powers seemed to me. I had appeared from nowhere, a strange, and to them misshapen being, a creature unlike anything they had ever imagined, and I found myself trying to explain, floundering about, trying to make clear matters which to me were most everyday and ordinary things, but to them were so far beyond their comprehension that they were utterly incapable of grasping them.

It was like trying to explain trigenometry or navigation to a small child or to make clear the principles and operation of some complicated ma-

chine to a savage. And yet this comparison is not the right one, for strange as it may seem, the creatures were quite capable of understanding the most intricate mechanical devices and scientific matters, although the fact that there were other intelligent beings in the world, or that for that matter there was any world except their own country, was utterly beyond them.

Of course I did not learn this and did not attempt to converse with them on such matters at this first interview. Our talk, for regardless of the fact that they did not speak I must call it a talk, was confined to the most simple matters. But as the weeks, months and years passed and I remained, as I still remain, among them, I tried to tell them of human life and the world I had known and of all manner of things which differed from their own strange ways and existence.

Gradually, too, I became adept at conversing with them by their uncanny means, which, I found later, was nothing supernatural, magical nor so very mysterious after all. It was accomplished in fact by vibrating waves sent through the air, something after the manner in which sound waves are sent, and which were produced by one pair of the creatures' antennæ and were caught and heard by another pair.*

CHAPTER 5.

IT was soon evident to me that even if the weird creatures could not fully grasp or understand the tale I related, still they believed it, or at least considered that it explained my presence in their land. Possibly they thought me a harmless lunatic, or again they may have decided I was a supernatural being, or maybe I was such a curiosity or monstrosity in their eyes that I was regarded as a valuable specimen. At any rate, whatever the reason, they decided that I was not to be harmed, and in fact was to be well treated, for my armed guards were dispersed and I was given to understand,—I would say told but for the fact that no words were spoken—that the being who had first found me on the sand was to be my companion and that he would attend to all my wants. My first and most pressing want was food, for I was once more ravenously hungry and the council or court and onlookers having left the chamber, though lingering and gazing at me most curiously, I expressed my wishes to my strange companion. Immediately he led me through dark passageways to a smaller room and there left me for a moment, returning with a bowl-like vessel containing some liquid and a beautifully devised casket or box filled with the biscuits such as he had given me upon the beach.

I devoured three of these and was about to eat the fourth when the creature, who had been watching me intently, called a halt and by the same strange brain message method warned me that I must be satisfied and that to partake of more might lead to grave results. I confess I was greatly tempted to disregard his warning, for there seemed no more sustenance in the stuff than in a dry cracker, but I remembered what a miraculous effect those I had eaten on the beach had had, and reluctantly replacing the wafer I drank a deep draught of the liquid. It was as clear and colorless as water, for which I had taken it, but as it passed my lips I almost dropped the bowl in surprise, for the beverage was the most delightful and refreshing thing I had ever tasted. It was neither sweet nor sour, but had a taste absolutely impossible to describe. Indeed, there are many things in this strange land which I am at a loss to describe in such a way that those who have not seen or experienced them can understand my meaning. Colors existed which were quite different from anything I had ever seen; there were sounds totally new to my ears and tastes that no words can describe.

Scarcely had the beverage passed my lips when I felt rejuvenated. No wine or liquor could have had such a remarkable effect. Not that it was heady or exhilarating like liquor, for my head remained perfectly clear, but I felt years younger. I seemed as strong and fresh as a youth of twenty and felt ready for anything. Then a delightful drowsiness came over me, and throwing myself on the couch, I instantly dropped off to a dreamless slumber.

I was aroused by the being who had me in charge as he entered the chamber bearing food and drink. As I munched the wafer-like biscuits, which were of a different character from those I had eaten the previous day, I tried my best to communicate with him. Or rather, I might say, to carry on a conversation, for he very evidently understood all that I said. Moreover, as on the preceding day, I was able to understand him. But the difficulty was that we had so little in common that it was almost impossible to converse at any length. However, he made it known that I was free to go and come as I pleased and that I was considered an honored guest from some other sphere, and I was vastly amused when he wished to know if I had dropped from the sky. Evidently the creatures knew nothing of a country beyond the mountain barrier, and in vain I endeavored to explain how I had come over the mountains and to tell of the world on the other side. To him such a thing was incredible, as unbelievable as his land would have been to me before I had seen it. Then, after much trouble, he told me—if I can use the word "told" when no sounds issued from him,—that no inhabitant of his country had ever passed those mountains, that beyond was nothingness and that his country comprised the

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(Note by Dr. Lyman)

"Mr. Bishop had of course never heard of radio-telephony. I am of the opinion that the beings among whom he found himself had discovered and perfected some form of radio waves by means of which intelligible messages could be transmitted from mind to mind without audible sounds. In other words, the unspoken thoughts could be transmitted on high frequency waves or on some form of waves akin to electro-magnetic waves. As is well known today, scientists have reason to believe that the lower animals possess a somewhat similar power and can receive and understand certain waves of which we have no knowledge—perhaps the missing waves that in length lie between heat waves and radio waves. It is also believed by many scientists that it is by some such means that pigeons, dogs, cats and even toads find their way home across unknown spaces and for immense distances, and that migratory birds fly unerringly from place to place. Recent investigations have also led to the conclusion that insects and crustaceans converse or at least communicate with one another, by means of waves produced by and received by their antennae. If this be so, then the highly developed and specialized crustaceans who inhabit the strange land described by Mr. Bishop might well have possessed a similar power carried to the nth degree.

Assuming this were so, then there would have been no mystery as to how they understood him or he them, for while spoken words vary with language the thoughts or brain impressions that words express must be identical regardless of spoken dialects or racial differences. Indeed, as will be seen later, Mr. Bishop's discoveries, as he relates them, bear out this logical conclusion. It is also highly probable that all the mechanism of the airships and other contrivances of these strange beings were actuated by waves similar to our electro-magnetic waves."—A. E. L.

entire world. This was most astounding to me, for I had come over the mountains without excessive difficulty, and with their marvelous airships I could see no reason why they should not have soared above the peaks. But when I questioned the fellow, and later talked with others, I learned to my amazement that the creatures perished miserably if they rose more than a few hundred feet above the earth. Their airships never attained a height of more than two hundred feet and I was informed that too-venturesome members of the community, who had attempted to traverse the mountains, had gasped and died long before they reached the summits. To them, strange as it may seem, an altitude of five hundred feet was as fatal as a dozen miles in air to human beings. Whether this was due to their physical peculiarities or to some peculiarity in their atmosphere I have never determined. I am of the opinion, however, that it is a little of both. Their air I am sure is far more rarefied than ours and thus of course would be unfit to sustain life even at moderate heights, while being evolved from crustaceans—as I am positive they are—and with modified gills instead of lungs, they are naturally less adaptable to changes in the density of air than are human beings. Indeed, later, when I on one occasion tried to scale the mountains, I discovered that it was with the utmost difficulty that I could breathe, even when half way to the summits.

But this was not the reason why I was forced to remain in this land even to the present time as I shall explain later.

But to resume my narrative of my experiences. As soon as I had finished my breakfast I started out to see the sights. It was, however, some time before I reached the outer air, for I found many most astounding and interesting things to attract me in the underground residences of these strange creatures.

The means of lighting the place was a puzzle, for as I have said, the illumination was a sort of glow that appeared to issue from the walls, floors and ceilings, as if in fact they were made of translucent material with lights behind them. I examined the material carefully and found it was formed of one continuous unbroken surface, as if moulded or cast in place, as I found later it was. Also, I discovered that it was the same material of which the airships were made. Indeed, later on I found that it was the sole material these beings possessed for constructing anything—that is, aside from wood which was seldom used and was rather a curiosity than otherwise, and a tough grass which they considered of little value, but from which a thin, light and excellent parchment-like material is made,—the material in fact upon which this manuscript is written. But the amazing part of it is that the metallic-like substance so widely used can be so altered or modified that it is adaptable for every purpose.

It can be made opaque, transparent or translucent; as hard as steel or as soft and plastic as putty; as brittle as glass or as flexible as rubber. It can be beaten or hammered like gold or copper; it can be moulded by hand or machine and then hardened, or it can be melted and cast. Moreover, it can be colored or tinted at will; it can be woven like thread and it can be cut, bored or worked like timber. By certain processes, too, it can be made to emit light indefinitely, while the light may yet be turned off or on at will by means of some electrical or similar power. This same mysterious force serves these creatures in place of steam, heat and all other forms of power.

It was of course a long time before I learned all this, and I was still longer in learning the source of the remarkable substance. Then, to my utter amazement I found it was sulphur! This statement may seem incredible, for sulphur is so well known and its properties so well understood that my fellow men will no doubt accuse me of telling a palpable falsehood. But the secret lies in the fact that these beings have discovered a property of sulphur of which humans are wholly ignorant. This is that sulphur is really a metal, the form known to us being only a salt or oxide, and it is the metallic sulphur which these weird creatures use for such a multitude of purposes.*

It was, as I have said, a great surprise to me to discover this, and I could not help thinking what marvelous accomplishments might be ours if we possessed the knowledge of obtaining this metal. I had never dreamed that a metallic material could be obtained from sulphur, and at first it seemed unbelievable. But as I thought upon the matter, I realized that, after all, it was no more astonishing than that aluminum metal could be secured from the soft rock called bauxite, many cargoes of which had been carried in ships on which I had served. Later, too, I spent much time at the vast deposits of sulphur which seem to underlie the whole country. Although it has been used for countless ages, yet these beings have never had to do any mining, for there are hills and plains composed entirely of the yellow stuff. Indeed, I was not long in deciding that the whole place is nothing more than the interior of a huge volcano, or a series of volcanic craters, which might partly account for the warmth of the climate, for no doubt there is still volcanic activity and heat below the surface of the earth. The processes used for refining the sulphur and transforming it into metal were most interesting, but I am no chemist and the technicalities are far beyond my powers to describe. There are huge works that cover many square miles, and the workers are, I found, all of different types, forms and appearances from the other inhabitants. In fact each art, profession, trade, and class, of the beings is, I soon found, distinct and has been evolved or developed in such a way as to give the greatest efficiency and best results along the lines of endeavor to which each is bound for life. I have mentioned the huge pincer-like claws of the soldiers, or rather police. In the same way diggers have limbs adapted to their labors; chemists possess appendages as delicate as the most acurately devised instruments, and so on.

But to return to the sulphur and its uses. Among other things that interested me greatly

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(Note by Dr. Lyman).

"Mr. Bishop was probably unaware that several chemists have declared their belief that the element sulphur is derived from a metallic base. Although no one has yet produced metallic sulphur, yet that does not prove the incorrectness of such an hypothesis. Soda, potash and many other common chemicals, which bear no resemblance to metals are merely salts or oxides of metals, although their metallic bases were formerly unknown. Modern chemistry, however, has, as is well known, produced metallic sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, etc."—A. E. F.

was the source of the marvelous power the creatures use. This was, I found, derived from a peculiar blackish and very heavy material which exists in vast quantities near the sulphur deposits. Of itself it is of little value, although it is slightly luminous and will cause sores like burns upon human skin as I discovered to my sorrow. But when combined with the metallic sulphur, or with certain by-products obtained in the manufacture of the latter, it produces most astonishing results. By varying the combinations and the proportions of materials it can be made to emit blinding light which goes on continuously forever without in the least diminishing, or it can be made to explode with a force greater than dynamite, while by still other methods it may be made to produce invisible power which can be harnessed as readily as steam and yet can be transmitted to great distances through the air, like electricity, but without the use of wires. About one hundred miles from the chief city is an immense power house, if such it may be called, and from this, power or energy is sent broadcast over the whole country. Thus, by having machines adapted to the purpose, this source of power may be tapped and used for any purpose, such as driving airships, industrial work, turning on or off lights etc. But the remarkable part of it, to me, is the fact that no machines, as we know such things, are used. I have visited the plant several times and yet have never found a single wheel, shaft or crank in it. There are merely immense chambers or vats into which the various substance are run, and grid-like mazes of bars and sheets of metal. These are suspended over the vats and a ceaseless play of many-colored and strangely tinted lights and intense heat seems to rush upward from the tanks and to be absorbed by the odd apparatus overhead. From these it is led into a labyrinth of receptacles and a mystifying, to me, network of conduits, cables and huge wires and up-standing rods. These scintillate with flashing lights and emit a cracking sound and send the power in all directions. The strangest thing about it, to my mind, is the fact that the creatures are not injured by this power, even when close to it and while it is passing through their bodies. At first I was deathly afraid of it, for it seemed like terrific discharges of electricity; but I found that even I could stand beside the generators, or whatever they may be called, and that with the colored flashes all about me and enveloping my body, I felt no ill effects. Rather, it gave me a pleasant tingling sensation which left me exhilarated for several days thereafter.*

Also, aside from the metal and the power, many other most valuable things are obtained from the sulphur and the black rock. A vast number of by-products result, and from these all or nearly all the wants of the inhabitants are obtained. Even the strange beverage I have mentioned was manufactured from a by-product, as are coloring materials, certain foods and many other things. Also, as I have said, wood is regarded as a curiosity. This is due to the fact that strangely enough there are practically no real trees in this strange land. By this I do not mean that trees do not exist, for there are great parks or gardens filled with them, but there are no wild trees, if I may use the expression. Ages ago, I understand, there were many, but these were all utilized and exhausted and fearing that trees would become extinct they were preserved in parks as curiosities.

Only when they die is the wood available and the creatures prize this highly and treasure it as though it were a most precious substance, using it as we might use gold or silver. Most of the country is covered with a coarse, sedgy grass, but there are many forms of shrubs and plants and immense areas of bare land which at first puzzled me.

I had seen no cultivated plants or gardens—except park-like places like botanical gardens—and I imagined that the bare areas were fields being prepared for cultivation, as I saw many of the beings working in them. Imagine my wonder when I found that these bare patches of earth provided the inhabitants with their food. Countless years ago, I was informed, the beings had abandoned raising food plants. The plants, so they discovered, merely drew sustenance from the air and soil and transformed this to food fit to eat. And the creatures, reasoning that this process of nature was a round-about method of making food, devised means of obtaining their provisions from the air and earth direct, doing away with the plants entirely.

From the edible materials thus obtained they make the wafer-like biscuit I have referred to and these, with their liquors and little pellets, form their entire diet. Each class or variety of wafer, I learned, contained different food values of a vegetable nature, while the pellets supplies the animal matter, and by choosing these any taste or need could be satisfied. Also, just as they secure provisions of a vegetable nature from the soil itself without the time and trouble involved in raising crops, so they manufacture the foods of an animal nature from the vegetable products. Animals, they say, merely transform the herbage they devour in to meat, and such things, so why raise living creatures with great trouble and care and then slaughter them, when the same materials, or at least material containing the same nourishment and the same chemicals, can be made direct?

And a word in regard to the animal life of this strange country may be of interest to any humans who find this document. At certain seasons, vast numbers of birds visit the great lakes or seas, which are all of fresh water, and I have found a great deal of pleasure in watching these, for the albatrosses, mollymokes, gulls and other familiar birds come over the mountains from the world I once knew, and seem to me a bit like visitors and old friends from my home. It was, in fact, these periodical visits of the sea fowl that gave me the idea of sending out my manuscript, in the hope that some man might find it. But to return to the animals that dwell here. There are a number of the giant rat-like

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(Note by Dr. Lyman).

*Probably the material described by Mr. Bishop is a very rich radio-active mineral akin to or identical with pitch-blende, and by combining this with derivatives of sulphur the marvelous powers of radium were harnessed. Just how the strange power was produced we cannot say, for Mr. Bishop was of course ignorant of technicalities, as he states. I should imagine, however, that the power was generated by breaking down atoms by means of radio activity and thus releasing the stupendous forces contained in them. This has long been a dream of scientists, for it is well known that a single atom of matter contains incalculable power or energy and that, if it were possible to break or explode atoms undreamed of forces would be at man's disposal. Unquestionably the power described by Mr. Bishop was transmitted by means of electro-magnetic or similar waves."—A. E. L.

creatures, as large as kids, such as the one I killed and devoured when I first gained the base of the mountains, and there are many small birds, but aside from these, no living creatures exist in a wild state. In zoos or museums are many most wonderful creatures, some of which bear a resemblance to those on the other side of the world, but most of which are wholly different and many of which are so astoundingly weird, gigantic or grotesque as to be horrifying, or to make me think I am dreaming or delirious when I look at them.

Some of these are gigantic reptiles with immense scaly bodies and with heads covered with great bony plates and armed with huge horns. They are ferocious looking creatures nearly fifty feet in length, but quite docile and harmless and very stupid. Others resemble giant seals, but instead of being covered with fur, their bodies are smooth and slimy, like eels. There are also creatures with enormously long snake-like necks and great round bodies. These are water animals and should they be seen at sea they would be veritable sea-serpents. There are several great beasts too, which appear to be some sort of elephants, though vastly bigger than any I have ever seen, and there are a few rhinoceros-like animals, besides numbers of smaller things, such as deer, goats, beasts somewhat like ponies, and giant turtles. Of carnivorous beasts there are none and I find nothing that at all resembles an ox or sheep. All these I understand once roamed the country wild, but were destroyed by the strange inhabitants until only those in captivity remained. But perhaps the weirdest of all these creatures in the parks or zoos are the insects. There are butterflies whose wings spread a yard across, flies as big as turkeys, caterpillars with a girth greater than my body and immense spiders with six-foot, hairy legs and immense, staring, fiery red eyes. These always give me a feeling of dread and nausea as I look at them, and many a time I have awakened, screaming, from a nightmare wherein I thought myself being attacked by one of these horrible creatures. The natives, however, seem to have no fear of them and I have often seen the younger ones, or if I may so call them the children, feeding the monstrous spiders through the bars of their cages. These bars by the way are made of the transparent form of the sulphur metal, and looking at the creatures, the bars are all but invisible—as are the cages—so that one seems to see a horrible beast unconfined and ready to spring at one. But of all the insects, those which interest me most are the giant-ants. These are as large as good-sized dogs and are kept in a vast pit-like enclosure. Here they hurry about, and labor ceaselessly, building huge mounds and digging tunnels, only to tear them down and start over again. They are the most ferocious of all the animals also, and if one of their number is injured or sick, the others, after carefully examining him, tear him to bits and devour his still moving body. On one occasion a great lizard-like beast died and his carcass was thrown into the ant pit and I fairly shook with terror as I watched the creatures, gnawing him to bits and with incredible strength dragging the immense body here and there. Often, too, the ants seem to be drilling and they seem to possess intelligences almost human. Often I think what terrible havoc they would play should they escape from their den, but I am assured that this is impossible, as the frail looking fence that borders the pit is made of a material that is certain death to any ant that touches it. Indeed, I heard, if I may use that term, the story of these ants. It seems that ages ago,—these beings have no means of recording time by the way,—the ants roamed at large and destroyed the inabitants everywhere. A constant war was waged between the two races and bloody battles were fought. In a way it was much like the Indian warfare at home, though far more merciless and cruel, for each side made slaves of their captives and gave no quarter.

Then the crustacean-like beings made a discovery. They found vast numbers of dead ants where an invading army had moved across a great pile of waste material from the sulphur works, and by testing this on captive ants they found that it was instant death to the creatures. This enabled them to exterminate their hereditary enemies, for the material was made in stupendous quantities and placed in a great wall or pile about the advancing host of the inhabitants. Thus guarded, the ants were powerless to harm them, and gradually all but a few of the ants were utterly destroyed. These few survivors were made prisoners and confined and it is the descendants of these that are in the pit today.

Since then, so I understand, there have been no wars or battles in the entire land and the soldiers or police are being done away with, as there is really no need for them. No more soldiers are bred and in a few years none of the old ones will remain alive.

(*To be concluded in the November issue*)

"Into the Fourth Dimension"

By RAY CUMMINGS

Author of the *"Girl of the Golden Atom"*, and *"Around the Universe"*.

THIS new story by Ray Cummings will not only entertain you but will mystify you as well. Mr Cummings possesses the unusual faculty of adroitly mixing science and fiction in a most attractive way.

Imagine a series of ghost-like creatures over-running the earth—creatures whom you can shoot and throw stones at without harming them—and you have a fine idea of what is in store in this extraordinary serial.

If you have already read Mr. Cummings *"Tarrano, the Conqueror"*, you will look forward to an exciting tale in *"Into the Fourth Dimension"*. This story is now running serially in *Science and Invention Magazine*.

A COLUMBUS of SPACE

By Garrett P. Serviss

Author of "The Moon Metal", "The Second Deluge", etc.

A minute earlier, we might have saved Edmund and Ala, but now they were in the midst of the flames. . . . Edmund saw me. . . . He raised his hand and seemed to be waving us off; he pointed upwards, as if commanding us to go.

What Went Before

THE hero of the story, Edmund Stonewall, has discovered how to utilize atomic energy. He constructs a car that can traverse interplanetary space, actuated by this energy, and with two friends starts on a trip to the planet Venus, not disclosing to them his intention at first. He reaches a rather desolate part of the planet, where daylight never appears, sees the almost ape-like inhabitants, cave dwellers, who wish to sacrifice one of them to the gods, and they rescue the proposed victim only by killing the High Priest. They get in among the valleys in a mountain of ice, on the edge of the dark face of the planet, taking with them some of the cave dwellers on sleds. The car with sleds fastened alongside and all but one of the cave-dwellers upon them, is carried now along a sort of glacial stream, but soon sleds and the unfortunate occupants disappear, and our travellers are left with only one of the ape-like cave dwellers, Juba, as company. Now they reach the warm regions of Venus, where there is perpetual day, and there find a highly developed race who communicate with each other by a species of telepathy, and our travelers are enchanted by the beautiful appearance of the beings, who are superior in every way to terrestrial mankind.

As they fly, a terrible catastrophe is narrowly averted, Edmund shooting the steersman on a threatening aeroplane. A beautiful woman, Ala, the heroine of the story, saves them from the wrath of the mob by her influence; she and Edmund fall in love with each other. Edmund has a rival, Ingra, in his claims on Ala, and the plotting and deeds of Ingra are directed to getting rid of the earthly visitors. They explore the country, are threatened by a huge monster, and at last get into a true Eden on the planet. The story leaves them with Ingra and his party in the midst of an attack upon the earthly visitors and upon Ala's escort.

A COLUMBUS OF SPACE

By GARRETT P. SERVISS

Conclusion

An Escape

OUR assailants retreated into the bushes as we threatened them with the pistols, but Edmund would not allow Ingra to escape with the others. The fellow was completely cowed, knowing the deadly power of our pistols, and he obeyed Edmund's commands with a dejected air, occasionally glancing at Ala, who disdained to return his look.

Edmund backed him into the open door of the car, and we all entered, after hunting up the maid who, half scared to death, had concealed herself in the bushes. Then Edmund closed the door and turned to the machinery, leaving to us the care of guarding our prisoner.

The latter sat quietly enough on a bench, Jack on one side of him and I on the other, while Ala placed herself as far from him as she could get.

I wondered at the fellow's audacity. Surely no man in his senses would have thought of winning a woman's heart by violence, but evidently his passionate nature had overcome all scruples of reason, and as for conscience, he had none.

Ala's detestation of him was written on her every feature.

After we had got out of the wild tangle of branches, vines, and flowers, the car rose to a considerable elevation, and Edmund circled about to get his bearings. Then Ala went to his side.

Conversing together, they looked out of the windows, and she indicated the direction that we were to pursue. First we darted high in the air, and then set off at a great rate. It now became evident at what a vast distance from the capital, and from the inhabited lands of Venus, we had landed in our wild descent from the cloud-dome.

But for Ala's topographical knowledge, we should have been long in finding the proper route.

IN the concluding chapters of this charming interplanetarian tale, we find our heroes beset by many new and extraordinary dangers. There is hardly a page of the concluding chapters in which excitement does not run high. We are not going to tell you the end of the story, because we do not wish to spoil it for you.

As in the previous installments, Professor Garrett P. Serviss has given an accurate scientific analysis of what may be found on Venus should the planet ever be expored.

Ingra a Prisoner

THE way once pointed out, however, we never swerved aside, and Edmund worked up the speed to as high a point as he deemed safe in that dense atmosphere, which seemed to flow in translucent waves about the sides of the rushing car. At last I asked Edmund what he intended to do with the prisoner.

"I'll put him behind bars," he replied grimly, "if I have to construct them myself."

Notwithstanding our great speed, the journey was a long one. We kept at an elevation of several miles, in order to command a wide view, and the scene was magnificent. The wilderness we were leaving behind was in a tropical zone, on the borders of that savage region where we had encountered the saurian monster, and a vast roll of strangely glowing clouds lay upon the far horizon.

But beneath us the country continually improved in aspect, signs of cultivation making their appearance, until at length we began to pass over villages, and then over small cities, each of which, in imita-

tion of the metropolis, had its little group of aerial towers, with fluttering banners. Occasionally we saw a few airships at a distance, traveling in various directions, and these became more numerous as we approached the capital.

Our approach was not unobserved, and a crowd of planes and airships came to meet and escort us as we drew near. Our reception at the principal landing of the great tower was most joyous.

Back to the City

THE aerial part of the city seemed suddenly to swarm with inhabitants, and the air was filled with excited excursionists rushing together from all sides.

On approaching the landing-stage, I saw a throng of brilliantly dressed people and officials awaiting us with welcoming smiles and gestures, and among them, to my great pleasure, I noticed Juba, standing in the foremost rank, treated with evident respect, and showing every sign of joy on his broad, hairy face. We had been absent not more than twenty-four hours, but we were greeted as warmly as if our stay had been a year.

No sooner was the car well over the landing than Edmund brought it to rest upon the broad platform, and threw open the door. Jack and Henry were the first to alight. The maid followed them, and I came next.

Edmund lingered a moment to secure something in the mechanism, and Ala stayed near him, while Ingra was behind them.

During the trip I had not liked Ingra's conduct; though, I confess, I do not know exactly how he could have pleased me in his bearing. But, at any rate, I felt an indefinite sense of anxiety whenever I glanced at him. He remained all the while in moody silence, occasionally looking at Ala in a way I did not fancy, but most of the time fixing his eyes covertly upon Edmund, whose every movement he watched as he manipulated the controllers.

Somehow, he impressed me with the idea that he was planning a stroke against us, and when I stepped from the car my anxiety suddenly flashed into a vivid apprehension of evil, and I could not resist turning back and saying to Edmund:

"Look out for Ingra, Edmund. He means no good."

"Don't worry. I'll take care of him," Edmund replied, glancing with a smile over his shoulder as he tightened a little hand-wheel.

A moment later Edmund approached the door, beckoned to Ala to follow. I saw now that he intended to leave Ingra in the car until he could explain the situation, and provide for his incarceration.

What followed was like a lightning-stroke.

The Car Is Lost

I SAW Edmund pitch forward, propelled from the car-door as if he had been shot out, and an instant afterward the door was slammed to, and I heard the bars fall into place.

Edmund recovered himself in a moment, and together we sprang at the closed door and threw ourselves against it. Of course, we made no impression. Edmund's face was as pale as a sheet.

"Quick—for Heaven's sake!" he cried. "Get something! Get me a bar! I must break it somehow. This is awful! Ala—inside! Can nobody get me a bar of steel?"

The crowd pressed round us, without comprehending what was going on. Nobody except ourselves knew that Ingra was in the car. Edmund ran to one of the windows, but even as he reached it the steel shutter was closed with a bang from within, and we heard the bolts shoot into their sockets.

It was the only time in my acquaintance with him that I ever saw Edmund Stonewall for an instant lose his wits. He seemed not to know what to do.

His face was dreadful to look upon. He pounded with his fists upon the steel walls of the car until his knuckles reddened.

As for the rest of us, we knew no more than he what to do. The excitement spread to the crowd, and they pressed upon us with wondering looks and exclamations.

A minute or two passed in this helpless agitation, and then the car gave a lurch, and a second later it rose from the platform!

Edmund cried out in helpless, passionate fear.

In a moment the car was a yard above the platform, and gathering speed. I felt my heart sink. Edmund became, if possible, paler than before.

"Hold it! Hold it!" he shouted, and with him I tried to grasp the smooth, polished walls that slipped away from our hands.

At this moment there was a rush in the crowd. People were flung aside, and to my amazement, as the car rose in the air, I saw Juba make a mighty leap, seize the steel grating covering one of the windows, and soar away with the machine like a huge baboon hanging on the outside of a cage.

Then the car shot toward the sky!

CHAPTER XVII

To the Rescue

A LOW exclamation, magnified by the multitude of strange voices into a mighty murmur, rose from the crowd, and every eye followed the retreating car.

In this emergency all of Edmund's sagacity and self-command instantly came back. He was once more the cool, resourceful master of the situation.

"An aeroplane!" he shouted, and at the word sprang toward one of the floating machines beside the landing.

Brushing aside the engineer, in a moment he had the machine in control. Jack and I were upon his heels, but Henry was not quick enough, and was left behind. There were only four or five men, the crew of the plane, on the craft.

With a skill and rapidity that astonished me, well as I knew his capacity, Edmund swung the huge machine round and, with reckless disregard of consequences, set the driving-screws whirring at their highest speed. The great tower seemed to melt away behind us, so quickly did we leave it.

But it was a mad chase.

A Race Begins

WHAT could this air-driven craft do against the car impelled by the mysterious interatomic force? Already the latter was rapidly diminishing

with distance. Still, we could see Juba clinging to the window-grating, although at every instant I expected him to fall.

But Edmund would not despair. His eyes shone as he drove the machinery of the plane to its utmost limit. The crew were stupefied, and offered no opposition.

"We must not lose sight of them," said Edmund, his self-control becoming more perfect as the minutes passed. "We must never lose sight of them for an instant."

"But surely," I exclaimed, "you cannot hope to overtake them?"

"Yes," he said almost fiercely, "I hope even that! Remember," he added more coolly, "that Ingra really knows nothing of the management of the controllers. He has watched me operate them long enough to know how to start the car; unless Heaven is against us, he will not be able to work it up to its best speed, and he can hardly direct it with certainty. At any moment he may find himself descending. Heaven grant that they do not come down with a rush."

"But there is Ala," I said. "She knows how to manage the machinery. Perhaps he will be compelled to entrust it to her."

Edmund ground his teeth in rage at my words.

"Yes, Ala is there, a prisoner!"

"And Juba," I added.

"But how long can he remain on that fearful perch? And what can he do?"

"If they are aware of his presence," I suggested, "perhaps Ala may find a way to communicate with him, and aid him in his efforts."

The idea seemed to strike Edmund, and he joyfully replied:

"Yes, yes, surely she will find a way. She is a great woman—a woman to trust in an emergency. What a brave act that was of Juba's! Who could have dreamed that under his shaggy exterior there was a heart of gold, and so quick a brain?"

"He was the head blacksmith in the cavern," said Jack. "If there is any way to get into that car, he will find it."

"It can only be done by aid from within," replied Edmund. "But I trust to Ala. She will find a way."

"They cannot but be aware that Juba is on the car," I said. "They must surely hear him, and his mere presence will have its effect."

"If Ingra does not contrive to throw him off," suggested Jack.

"He cannot get at him," was Edmund's reply. "If only he doesn't lose his breath with the swift motion, and if his strength holds out, all may be well. But we must keep them in sight. It is our only chance, and theirs."

The car was now so far away that it looked very small; but, being thrown in silhouette against the softly glowing cloud-dome—for it was at a greater elevation than ours—we could still, with the aid of a glass, clearly see Juba clinging to the outside.

It was a comfort to know that he was yet able to retain his perch. If he could stay there to the end, he might be of estimable service when the crisis should arrive.

The Question of Elevation

AT first I was somewhat surprised that Edmund kept at so low an elevation compared with that of the fleeing car. We were not more than a half-mile above the ground, while the object of our pursuit was at least three miles high. But in a little while it became obvious that the course which Edmund had adopted was a very wise one. In the first place, by keeping at a low elevation we could always see the car projected against the bright sky, and there was thus less danger of its escaping us.

In the next place, as Edmund pointed out, when the car came down, as it must do some time, we could cut in under it, so to speak, and approach the landing-point along a base-line shorter than the diagonal that the car would have to pursue.

"The higher he goes," said Edmund, "the greater our advantage will be. Fortunately, he seems to be rising all the time. There is no danger that he will run away in that direction.

"He has no conception of anything above the cloud-dome, and his only object is to get as far away as possible, in order to defy pursuit before landing. I expect every moment, now, to see him begin to descend."

"But are you sure that he can manipulate the controllers well enough to make a safe descent?" I asked.

"Let us pray that he can," replied Edmund. "I will give him credit for great intelligence. If he did not possess extraordinary capacity, he would never have learned, simply by watching me, how to run the machinery.

"The fact that he could penetrate so far gives me hope, that he has learned enough to insure their safety. The highspeed controllers, used when astride the atmosphere, are in a different location from the others, and are manipulated somewhat differently.

"I did not touch them during our journey, so that I have little fear that he will discover their use. It is now evident that we can at least keep the car in sight.

"The resistance of this dense atmosphere is a serious obstacle to a machine which, unlike the plane, does not derive an advantage from that very circumstance."

An Alarm

WE were now many miles from the capital, and traveling toward the tropical belt. It was evident that Ingra intended to take refuge again in the wilderness, though at a point far distant from the place where we had so recently encountered him.

"Ala has told me," said Edmund, "that Ingra, who is very fond of wild sports, and who until our arrival seems to have exhibited no evil characteristics, has a number of hunting-lodges in this vast wilderness, and it was due to the unlucky fate that guided us in our descent that we fell into his hands.

For, unknowingly, we came down within a half-mile of one of his lodges. He always has a retinue in attendance at his lodges, and probably he is now making for one of these places."

"Do you think they are aware that we are following?"

"Of course, they will expect to be pursued, but

I am in hopes that Ingra has not seen us, and does not know that we have kept within eyesight. You remember that the car has no window in the rear—a mistake of construction which until now I have regretted. It has not swerved from its course since starting, and I have been careful to keep directly behind it.

"Consequently, there is every reason to think that Ingra, trusting to the speed of the car, has not even taken the trouble to look behind. Besides, we have kept comparatively close to the ground, where it is not easy to see us from a distance, and the moment I perceive the car beginning to descend I shall run down to the very tree-tops in order to be the better concealed."

Our hopes now rose high. We had demonstrated an ability to keep the car in view, though, to be sure, it had become little more than a dark speck in the sky, and its steady motion relieved our anxiety concerning a possible disaster from Ingra's inability to manage it.

Several hours passed, and once more we had left the inhabited lands behind and were passing over the border of the wilderness, where the luxuriance of the vegetation surpassed that of the Amazonian forests of the wilds of Borneo.

Suddenly, Edmund uttered an exclamation.

"Great Heavens!" he cried. "Look! Something is wrong. It is all to end in disaster at last!"

Fear of Losing the Car

JACK and I, startled by Edmund's agitation, glanced at the distant car. It was falling from the sky!

It shot hither and thither, sweeping in long descending curves, and darting to one side and another, like a collapsed balloon.

"What can have happened?" I exclaimed. "Good Heavens! If Juba should be flung off now, our only ally would be lost."

"No; we have another," said Edmund quietly, all his self-mastery asserting itself—"Ala, herself."

"Look," he continued, a moment afterward, "the car rights itself. It will come down all right."

It was so. The eccentric movements ceased, and we saw the car descending rapidly, but with a steady motion which indicated that it was again under control. During the ten minutes that the wild tumble lasted, it had fallen within half a mile of the ground, and now it was gliding swiftly away from us, over the top of the great forest.

Edmund strove to increase our speed, making the silent engineer and his men aid him with their utmost exertions. Glancing behind, I now noticed, for the first time, that several airplanes were pursuing us; but they were far behind.

They had probably started in pursuit as soon as possible after our chase began, but we had been so absorbed in watching the car that we had not even thought of looking behind. We had trusted entirely to ourselves, but now I felt a satisfaction in knowing that we should have assistance in an emergency.

I called Edmund's attention to our pursuers, but he gave no heed. His whole mind and soul were fixed upon the car. In a little while it had descended so low that it became necessary for us to rise, in order to keep it in view.

Nevertheless, as Edmund had foreseen, our course, lying so near the ground, had given us a certain advantage, and we had drawn preceptibly nearer while running for the point toward which the car was descending. Still, it now became very difficult to keep the object of our pursuit in view.

At times we lost sight of it entirely against the dark background of foliage. But an occasional gleam from the polished sides of the car enabled us to retain a general notion of its location.

A Battle

AT last it dropped into the great sea of vegetation, and was completely lost. At this time we were apparently, about three miles behind it. "Keep your eyes fixed on the point where it disappeared," said Edmund. "Don't let your sight waver. I shall make straight for the place."

Fortune favored us, for at the spot where the car had sunk from sight a group of enormous trees lifted their mighty tops high above the general surface of the forest, and this landmark was invaluable to us.

When we had run within an eighth of a mile of these trees, Edmund at last slowed up, and got the airplane under perfect control.

We crept silently above the tree-tops, every eye fixed upon the spot where we expected at any moment to see the car.

Suddenly a forest glade appeared, shadowed by the very trees that had served as our guides, and there was the car resting upon the ground! The door was toward us, and open.

In it stood Ala, looking with a horrified countenance upon a spectacle that might well have frozen her blood.

Ingra and Juba were engaged in a terrific battle. At one moment they rolled upon the ground, locked together, looking like a man and a wild beast at death-grips.

Each was fiercely exerting his utmost strength. Now one, now the other, was on top.

Each endeavoring to throttle the other, they revolved so rapidly that the eye could hardly follow the successive phases of the struggle.

Suddenly they rolled against a rock, and the shock releasing their hold, both leaped to their feet. But neither flinched, nor gave back.

They sprang together again with demoniac fury, Juba's huge eyes blazing out of the wild tangle of his hair, while his huge, shaggy arms resembled those of a bear rushing madly to the death-hug.

But Ingra was a foe worthy to encounter so formidable an antagonist. With amazing strength and agility, he hurled his assailant backward, and then, to my horror, I saw that he had his long knife in his hand, while Juba had no weapon.

Juba a Fighter

LOWERING his form as he sped to the onset, and with a wicked lunge, Ingra darted upon his foe. For an instant I thought that the blade had reached the vitals of his antagonist, for Juba staggered backward, but a second later Ingra shot away as if the walking-beam of an en-

gine had struck him, and fell, stunned and motionless.

Juba's mighty foot had been propelled against his chest, for, like a Frenchman, the creature fought with arms and legs alike.

"Now you have him!" shouted Jack, dancing with excitement, as Edmund swept the airplane toward the spot. "Pin him down! Don't let him up!"

Juba sprang at his foe, but the latter had been driven so far away by the terrible blow that before Juba could seize him he had recovered, and was on his feet again.

"Don't let him get away," cried Edmund, leaping from the airplane as it touched the ground, and rushing, with Jack and me on his heels, to the scene of the encounter.

But Ingra was too quick.

Seeing his enemies swarming, he turned and ran with the speed of a deer.

In a second he had disappeared in the undergrowth.

CHAPTER XVIII.

We Find Another Enemy

AFTER struggling and stumbling through the thicket for a few minutes, we gave up the chase sooner than we should have done on account of Edmund's anxiety to return to Ala, who had remained where we first saw her, standing in the door of the car.

When he stopped, we all stopped; though Juba, whose blood was up, would have continued the pursuit if he had not been compelled to desist. He disregarded the rest of us, but obeyed Edmund's call like a faithful hound.

It was a great disappointment that Ingra had escaped, but there was no help for it. We must face the consequences, and probably there was not one of us who did not feel an unuttered foreboding of disaster. We had made for ourselves a terrible enemy, and it was perfectly certain that as long as we remained he would pursue us with all the energy of his fiercely passionate nature and the resources of his acute mind.

Edmund expressed this when he exclaimed, on our hurried return to the car:

"That fellow and I cannot both live in this world. He will not let me alone, but I will never run from him."

"Then why don't you get out of his world?" said Jack, who sometimes expressed rather bluntly his suddenly conceived notion of right and justice. "You are the interloper, not he."

"Am I an interloper," replied Edmund, with flashing eye and flushed cheek, "when she"—pointing to Ala, who, having heard of our approach, came joyously to meet us—"calls upon me to defend her?"

Jack made no reply, but whispered in my ear:

"Jove! I don't blame him. I'd die fighting for her myself."

Ala Once More

ALA'S beauty seemed tenfold greater in the flush of excitement that overspread her features. She greeted us with hardly less warmth than she bestowed upon Edmund, and the caressing touch of her hand on Juba's hairy arm was a reward that the poor fellow plainly accepted in full compensation for the fearful risk he had run. And he deserved her thanks because, but for his presence, Ingra would have abducted Ala as soon as the car landed, and we should have arrived too late.

We had hardly reached the car again when one of the pursuing planes came up, and close after it followed several more. They brought a number of court officials and attendants, who were quite in the dark as to the meaning of this extraordinary escapade. For, it will be remembered, there had been no time to tell anybody of the presence of Ingra in the car when we arrived at the tower.

Ala explained the situation, and the excitement of her friends was laughable. They ran about in the underbrush, anxious to show their devotion, and possibly thinking that they would find the fugitive concealed close at hand.

But Ala recalled them; and, as more planes arrived, organized the search with a rapidity that increased my respect for her ability. There was one remarkable feature in her intercourse with her people that struck me with great force.

She was a queen, and she had the look and bearing of one when she chose to assert her authority; but there was no appearance of servility in the manner of those surrounding her, and she demanded none. If ever there was a democratic Queen, it was she. Everybody recognized her rank, but it was rather with evidences of admiration and love than of mere submission.

In a few minutes she had arranged her plan. Airplanes were sent scouting over the forest in all directions with orders to search every nook where Ingra might be in hiding. Then she turned to Edmund, and they communed together for a time, while we awaited the result of their consultation.

The decision, apparently somewhat against, Edmund's opinion, for he wished to aid in the search, was to return at once to the capital. Accordingly, we embarked in the car; and were soon speeding away from the wilderness, leaving a dozen of the planes to prosecute the search.

After our return to the capital a very different series of events began to occupy our attention.

Of Ingra we heard no more, for the present. One by one the air planes that had been left to hunt him down returned unsuccessful.

It was certain that he had adherents in the city, as he had elsewhere, for his family was very old and powerful, and had always occupied an exalted position; but still we saw nothing to alarm us. Nevertheless, we never doubted that he was simply biding his time and planning his vengeance.

To me the thought became an obsession, and sometimes I could hardly sleep on account of it. It was horrible to think of our being practically alone here in this distant world, among a people who knew nothing of our ways, and who treated us with respect only because in the first place we excited their curiosity, and in the second place because Ala's favor was our shield.

But I could not get away from the fear that when the novelty should be over the romantic attachment which their queen had formed for Edmund would cease to captivate the public's fancy, and then the scale would incline against us. Whenever I broached the subject to Edmund, however, he pretended to treat my fears as purely imaginary.

Jack's Tale of His Troubles

JACK, always impressionable and erratic, quickly lost himself in the delights of life in the brilliant capital, and could not be brought to think of the future. To Henry I dared not open my mind, for he was already only too much disposed to brood and to take the dark view of everything. If he had known my doubts he would have driven me mad by magnifying them.

For a while he tormented us with complaints and begged to be taken back to the earth, until Edmund turned upon him in such a fury that he never again ventured to open his lips on the subject.

In the meantime it was delightful to watch the gracious manner in which Ala sought to distract us.

She began by exhibiting the marvels of the capital. Thus far we had only seen the great throne-room, the hall of justice, and one or two smaller apartments in the palace.

Now she conducted us through halls and rooms more splendid than I could have imagined to exist. The golden decorations were beyond belief in their richness, in the astonishing quantity of the precious metal lavished upon them, and in the delicacy and beauty of the forms.

Nothing interested Henry so much as this. It stirred his cupidity, which I must confess, although I liked him, was a prominent defect of his character.

"What a place for a Pizarro!" he exclaimed.

"Yes," said Edmund, "but there is no cringing Atahualpa here. You need not dream of carrying off any of this wealth."

"But *you* seem to be in a fair way of falling heir to it," put in Jack with a laugh.

Edmund colored, but did not reply.

"For shame, Jack," I said. "Can't you remember that if Ala does not understand our language, she has a marvelous power of reading our thoughts?"

"That's so," said Jack. "Upon my word I feel rather uncomfortable in this world where a man's mind goes naked.

"Why, a little while ago I was strongly tempted to steal a kiss from a pretty maid who was showing me a wonderful affair of gold and jewels. I don't know whether it was an idol or what, and upon my word, before I could have made a motion—and, of course, I didn't really mean to—she darted away from me as if she had been stung, and her winning smiles were changed for a black look that made me hang my head."

After this we all became a little more circumspect in our comments, and tried to keep our thoughts to ourselves, unless, as was generally the case, they were such as our entertainers could only find pleasure in knowing.

A Wonderful City

I should have to write a book to tell you about all the surprising things that Ala showed us in the palace, and in the city—for we made a tour of that also.

The streets were wonderful, crooked as cow-paths, crowded with people, magnificent with shops filled with all sorts of curious objects, and bordered with thousands of aerial structures that towered up and up, glittering like a Jack Frost paradise at Christmas; while at all elevations air ships and airplanes passed and repassed, steering clear of one another with the grace and ease of Venetian gondolas.

She took us through a great library, where we saw the printed books to which I have referred; but there was nothing to compare in strangeness with the visit which we finally made to a kind of temple, where we saw the most remarkable character in Venus, the "Head Medicine Man," as Jack facetiously dubbed him.

But we couldn't remain long in a facetious mood when in the presence of this personage. And, besides, he gave us a shock, the full nature of which I did not comprehend until long afterward, when it came upon me with overwhelming force.

Jack's title for him may have been sufficiently descriptive of his functions. He seemed to be a kind of masculine pythoness, and his gloomy, cavernous apartment in the center of the temple, strangely lighted with huge, dull-red electric globes, was apparently a Delphic shrine for the people of Venus.

The High Priest

IT WAS our first introduction to any thing resembling superstition among these people, and to me, at least, it came as a great surprise, for in this world of light, beauty, and harmony, such a thing seemed strikingly out of place. The evident awe with which Ala regarded this high priest of mystery displeased me also.

Contrary to what one might expect, this man, who was of extraordinary stature, I should say nearly seven feet tall, showed no signs of age. He seemed to be in middle life, and very vigorous; and, as he sat on a kind of throne of some black, highly polished metal, with his elbow resting on a short pillar capped with a circlet of red jewels that blazed like living coals, his huge head and strong face were marvelously impressive.

I never saw such a face anywhere else. It was beardless, and as white as marble. Usually he allowed only his profile to be seen; and one could not look upon it without a creeping of the nerves. His nose was immense, resembling a great curved beak, and his deep-sunk eyes, roofed with projecting brows, were as black as jet, but curiously luminous as they gleamed sidewise out of their pent-house.

But when he turned his full face, even Edmund started back. He seemed to project his countenance toward us like a monstrous bird stretching out its neck, and his glowing eyes appeared to penetrate our inmost thoughts.

This lasted only for a moment; and then he turned his profile again and remained motionless.

Ala then had a long communication with Edmund, at the end of which he turned to us and said:

"This is the most remarkable thing that we have yet encountered. It seems that this is the center of their religious system, and that strange man is its head. It is, as far as I can make out, based upon a kind of sun-worship.

The Sun and Venus

"AT rare intervals the cloud-dome opens overhead in a narrow rift, through which the sun appears for a few moments, as a vast, blinding ball of fire; larger and brighter, of course, than we ever see it from the earth. Sometimes a whole generation passes without this momentary opening of the heavens.

"Ala herself has never seen the vision of the bright god of the sky; but, like all her people, she regards it as a manifestation of a higher governing power, and every time that the phenomenon occurs there is an extraordinary outburst of enthusiasm, which arrests all other affairs, and the whole planet is swept by a wave of religious frenzy.

"This high priest is regarded as the mortal representative of the power above. Upon his death another, chosen by what I suppose may be called a council of augurs, takes his place. He has all the sacredness and influence of a Delphic oracle, and his utterances are considered as sure prophecies of future events."

"I'd never come to *him* for a fortune," broke in Jack. "I don't like his looks."

"Hush! But that's just what you have come for," replied Edmund with a smile. "And I don't know how the thing is going to work out for us. Ala has brought us here to learn this priest's opinion about—well, about *me*. You will understand. If he proves unpropitious, it won't be well. I hope for a favorable oracle."

This put an entirely new complexion upon the affair, and I began to regard the occupant of the black throne with an apprehension that I had not felt before. I could have wished our fate to lie in anybody's hands but his. I quite agreed with Jack on that point.

I wondered why Ala had not consulted this authority earlier, if she did not feel free to make her own choice and act her own will. Now that we, through Edmund, were so deeply involved, the consequences could not but be very serious if another adverse influence besides that of Ingra was directed against us.

But I suppose the girl queen had simply followed the dictates of her heart at first, and then events had so crowded upon one another that there was no opportunity to take counsel.

We were not compelled to wait long to discover the trend of the oracle. The beaked face and the jetty eyes were turnd upon us again, and without warning the gigantic form rose to its full height. One arm was thrown out toward us in a gesture of repulsion, while the eyes blazed from the out-thrust colorless countenance so fiercely that, in spite of all my efforts at self-command, I absolutely quailed before them.

Henry started back, and would have fled incontinently if Edmund had not seized his arm and detained him. Juba alone, to my surprise, remained totally unmoved. Either he did not understand, or else he had unwavering confidence in us, and so feared nothing.

Ala Defiant

ALA, for a moment, was overwhelmed with seeming disappointment and sorrow. Then she slowly raised her head, her cheeks reddened, her eyes shone with a determined look, and, meeting the glance of the great priest unflinchingly, she laid her hand on Edmund's shoulder. I saw a mingled look of pride, love, and defiance pass over Edmund's features; and then he faced the new enemy he had found with a firm glance.

"Now we are in for it," whispered Jack. "If Edmund pulls us out of this, I'll swear by him forever."

But the immediate consequences were not so serious—at least, in appearance—as our fears had anticipated.

The priest, from his towering elevation, glanced scornfully at Ala; and then, in a low, monotonous tone, began a kind of chant. Only Ala, of course, understood him; but, as she listened, an expression of growing horror came over her face. The scene lasted only two or three minutes. When the chant was finished, the oracular speaker slowly sank back upon his throne and turned away his face, which had become once more as impassive as marble.

Ala could hardly remain upright. She leaned on Edmund's arm, and, as I thought, sobbed.

Suddenly she straightened. The queenly look and manner returned. Her whole bearing and expression denoted resistance and resolution. Turning her back upon the black throne, without another glance at its occupant, but with a look at Edmund —in which her inmost soul shone forth in a way that there was no mistaking—she led us from the chamber.

The Priest's Prophecy

WHEN we were alone afterward in an apartment in the palace, Edmund told us the meaning of what had occurred.

"That the decision was adverse," he said, "I need not tell you. We have got the religious head of the planet against us now. But his closing speech, which Ala has explained to me as best she can, was a queer medley—a sort of prophetic vision, it would seem—which greatly affects Ala, though for my part I only laugh at it."

"But what was it?" urged Jack.

"Oh," said Edmund, "only a crazy Mother Shipton jumble of nonsense. He talked about a grand conflagration and a general wiping out of things and persons that he doesn't like. I snap my fingers at his divination, but without any mumble magic he can do us a lot of harm. If I could persuade Ala to go, I'd quit Venus within twenty-four hours. But I don't believe she'd consent to go, and I won't leave her, so that's the end of it."

Henry groaned in spirit, but Jack showed no white feather, and I don't believe I did either.

"Bully for you, Edmund!" Jack cried. "Go in and win. We'll stand by you, if we never see old New York again."

Edmund smiled with gratification, and grasped us each warmly by the hand.

CHAPTER XIX

An Extraordinary Hunt

THE significance of what had occurred in the temple gradually dawned upon me afterward, but it was never so clear in my mind as to produce more than an uneasy and growing foreboding.

Edmund did not mention the subject again, and there was no outward manifestion of the new opposition which had been set up against us. Naturally, it would require time to develop its force. It was a struggle between two opponents of equal power, for if the "Big Medicine Man," as Jack continued, to call him, was supreme in religious affairs, Ala was nevertheless queen, and her popularity was a bulwark to her authority.

Besides, so far as we knew, the affair was a secret known only to the persons immediately concerned. There had been no witnesses of the scene before the black throne.

In the meantime, Ala showed as little anxiety as Edmund. She was almost continually with us, and the time glided away very pleasantly with the entertainments which she was constantly providing for our amusement.

Color Music

OUR attention was now once more turned to the mystery of the color music. It was perfectly clear, after what we had learned in the wildness, that the play of colors which had so astonished us furnished but a part of the esthetic enjoyment of these people.

Frequently there were what I may call concerts in the palace, and on these occasions I became convinced that more than half of the effect produced by the dramatic harmonies that gushed in glowing waves of color from the great circles on the walls was due to the production of sounds inaudible to us.

Edmund, as I had anticipated that he would do from his remark in reply to Jack's enthusiastic demand when the secret of the singing birds first burst upon us, attacked the problem by rendering this strange music audible to us. And he succeeded, as he always succeeded.

How he did it I cannot pretend to explain, but he said that it was as simple in principle as a telephone. After many experiments he constructed three little boxes, one for each of us, and when we had attached them over our ears we could actually hear the sounds produced by the colored undulations.

I can never describe those sounds. They thrilled the very soul. They had a strange aerial quality, as if they were the voices of spirits floating in the air about us. The music that they produced reminded me, by the sweetness of its melodies, of an Æolian harp; but it was more measured, and infinitely more varied. Listening to it, we felt stirred to depths of our being of whose existence we had not dreamed.

We were exalted, and something beyond human capacities of enjoyment seemed to have been given to us. Yet Edmund said that the exquisite pleasure we were enabled to experience by the aid of his contrivances was only a rude, imperfect, mechanical reproduction of that which was enjoyed by the people of Venus. But we were grateful to him for affording us this glimpse into the possibilities of a transcendent development of the physical senses.

"It is the nature of Venus," Edmund declared. "This world so near the sun receives from the great orb richer gifts than come to the earth. The atmosphere here is tremulous with vibrations originating in the sun, which impart a character to the physical organization of the inhabitants of this planet which we can hardly imagine. Their joys are at the same time more delicate and more intense than ours."

An Exploring Party

WE were never tired of tasting the new pleasure that had been partially placed before us, but Edmund's restless spirit soon drew us away into fresh adventures.

He was determined to explore the torrid circle. He had learned from Ala that no one had ever been able to penetrate beyond the place where Ingra had left us to be devoured by the monsters of the great swamps; but with his car he believed that we could go wherever he chose, and he persuaded Ala, whose desire for knowledge and love of adventure were not less than his, to consent to a most extraordinary expedition.

In the preparations for this I believe that we all forgot the new danger that threatened us since the opposition of the Great Oracle had been declared.

Whatever might be the form that danger was to assume, it kept itself in the background and worked in secret. I had an uneasy feeling that in some manner Ingra would associate himself with it.

While the people, and even the high officials in the palace, apparently knew nothing of what had occurred, I felt certain that our arch-enemy would learn of it and remorselessly pursue the advantage that it gave him.

Again and again I was on the point of urging Edmund to leave the planet while there was yet time and take Ala with us, if she would consent to go, as he had himself suggested. He was so absorbed in his schemes, however, that I hesitated to disturb his thoughts.

In a short time all our preparations were made, and we set out on what I must regard as the wildest and most inconsiderate adventure that we had yet undertaken.

We started, as usual, from the great tower of the palace, our company consisting of eight persons, all that the car could conveniently accommodate. These comprised, beside ourselves, Ala, Juba, two maids chosen from Ala's immediate attendants, and a high official of the palace—a sort of majordomo—a very intelligent person and of great physical strength.

Of course we had our weapons, both the pistols and the guns, with an abundance of ammunition and of provisions. We were attended by half a dozen airplanes, which were to accompany us as far as they could go, and were there to await our return from the unknown region.

The Wonders of Venus

WE took the direction of the mines; and beyond them we entered the wilderness, and soon found ourselves involved in the zone of clouds and semi-darkness. Here, at a point where a curiously shaped mountain peak, rising just on the border of

the twilight-land and pointing its bold outlines against the strongly illuminated sky behind, served as a landmark which we could not miss on our return, the airplanes were ordered to await us, and we pushed on alone with the car.

Jack, of course, was all alive for this adventure, as he always was for anything promising excitement; but Henry didn't like it, and would have stayed behind if he had had the courage to remain alone among strangers. For my part, my curiosity was greatly aroused; and, besides I found immense interest in watching the enthusiasm of Ala.

Her adventurous spirit was in its element; and, as far as appearances went, she gave no thought to future troubles. According to custom, the control of things at the capital had been left in charge of a sort of board of regency, which was a permanent institution, as I learned, Ala not being the first queen who was fond of visiting distant parts of the country, though she was the first who had shown a disposition to explore unknown regions.

On leaving the airplanes behind, we plunged deeper and deeper into gloom, and were compelled to use our electric lights. Among Edmund's special preparations was a small search-light, placed at the peep-hole in the front end of the car, and this was now brought into requisition.

It gave us startling views of the nature of the surface beneath.

First we ran for many miles above an area covered with vast swamps and bogs, with the oddest conceivable shapes of vegetation. We were keen to see some of the gigantic animals which we knew, from our first startling experience, inhabited this region, and it was not long before the light found one out.

We were about a hundred feet above the ground, and proceeding slowly, when Edmund, who had placed himself beside the search-light and was peering through the opening, said quietly:

"There! Would you like to take a look?"

Ala was beside him in a moment, and she could not repress an exclamation, or refrain from starting backward, although in a second she recovered and laughed at her own nervousness. There was room for only one, beside Edmund, at the little window, and when Ala had satisfied her curiosity we each took our turn.

When mine came I was for an instant almost as much agitated as Ala had been.

A Strange Monster

DIRECTLY ahead of us, not more than seventy-five yards distant, there was a shallow pond, its banks thick with tangled bushes, and in the midst of it stood a monster on eight legs, tawny-colored in the electric light, seeming to bristle with stiff hairs all over its huge round body. Its head was relatively small, black, and apparently armored with polished jet, and faceted with innumerable eyes, which flamed in the brilliant beam poured upon them.

"Good Lord!" I could not but exclaim. "It is like a prodigious tarantula! Look! It is going to leap at us!"

"Upon my word," said Edmund, "I think the fellow does mean fight. Get away a moment, and I'll swing the car round. We'll give him a broadside if he becomes too ugly."

Accordingly, the car was swung into such a position that one of the side windows faced the creature, and Edmund brought the movable search-light to the window, which he threw wide open.

"For Heaven's sake!" cried Henry. "Don't do that. He'll get at us."

"Don't be alarmed," Edmund replied, "He can do us no harm. We are two hundred feet away.

All of us crowded about the window, and it is unnecessary to say that the automatic guns were in our hands and the pistols ready.

During the few seconds that the streaming light had been removed the monster had changed his position; and now, as the glare fell upon him again, we were startled to find that he had approached us. He was within forty feet of the car, standing in a grassy glade, having with inconceivable rapidity and agility clambered or leaped over the stunted trees and bushes surrounding the pond in which we had first seen him.

His huge spiky body seemed to bristle with anger, and his countless eyes blazed like so many great rubies in the piercing light. It was truly a heart-quaking sight!

Ala started back with a womanly cry of alarm; and Henry, I am almost ashamed to say, sank helpless upon a bench.

"I believe he is going to jump at us," said Edmund quietly. "Aim for his head, and let him have half a dozen shots in quick succession."

Jack's Narrow Escape

BEFORE anybody could touch a trigger the awful creature bounded with lightning speed upon the car.

If you have ever seen a "hunting-spider" leap upon a fly, you know the incredible rapidity of its spring and its stroke. This monster was no less swift in his action.

Through sheer nervous shock we simultaneously discharged our guns; but without aim, and, unfortunately, without effect.

The monster struck the car with a force that made it roll back, and two shaggy legs entered the window.

A yell of horror and terror broke from Jack's lips, and in an instant he was dragged from the window, our terrible assailant dropping out of sight at the same moment!

Edmund sprang to the controllers, and the car sank swiftly to the ground. As we landed in a tangle of bushes, Edmund leaped out into them, calling to me to follow. Then the light streaming from the open window fell upon the most awful spectacle that a man ever lived to tell about.

The monster was within twenty feet of us, holding Jack high above the ground with the claws of two of its legs, and turning him round and round, as a spider prepares a fly for his meal.

The dreadful jaws were open to receive the morsel, when a stream of fire shot from Edmund's gun, followed instantly by half a dozen more.

The animal reeled, and its legs gave way, thrashing the bushes as it tumbled on its side.

Jack dropped like lead, and I rushed to his side, while Edmund pumped more shots into the huge

rolling body, whose struggles broke the intertwining branches with terrible crashes.

As I reached Jack he resembled a shapeless lump. Edmund rushed back as soon as he could to look at him.

CHAPTER XX

In the Whirlwinds of Venus

BUT the case proved, on examination, not to be so bad, after all.

Jack was not dead, and the great beast was.

Still, the poor fellow seemed terribly injured. His clothing was ripped to shreds, and his face was disfigured. He had been rolled up almost into a ball; and I marveled when I saw him stretch out his legs, for I thought that every bone must have been broken.

His athletic training had, perhaps, saved him, his joints being supple and his muscles elastic.

"Just in time," he muttered, trying bravely to smile. "He had me in his jaws once, but I kicked away."

As we lifted him between us to carry him back to the car, Ala approached, pushing her way with anxious face through the tangle of weeds and shrubs. Juba, his great eyes shining like flames, was close behind her.

Ala uttered a cry of joy when she saw that we were safe, but her face was filed with pity as her eyes fell upon Jack. She helped Juba to open a way for us back to the car.

No sooner had we placed the injured man on the floor than she was on her knees beside him, striving to stanch the wounds on his face and hands. She and Edmund worked together as if they had been trained nurses.

They tore up garments to make bandages, and in a little while Jack looked like a patient in an emergency hospital. Fortunately, he seemed to have no internal injuries; and Edmund declared that, barring the possibility of poison from the fangs, there was no danger of a fatal result.

Jack's Courage

NEVERTHELESS he said, we must start on our return at once.

"Not on your life!" Jack exclaimed. "See here, Edmund, I won't go back. This expedition is not going to be ruined on account of such a little accident. It's just beginning to get interesting."

"But you may be poisoned," said Edmund.

"Stuff and nonsense!" returned Jack. "There's no poison about it. I tell you I won't go back. I'm not going to be scared out by a beast like that. You've finished him, and that ends it."

At first Edmund insisted; but Jack was so obstinate, and he really seemed so strong, that at length Edmund said:

"Well, we'll go on a little way. If Jack seems to be the worse for it, we'll put back again at top speed."

So it was decided, and we kept on.

No one had any desire to examine the monster we had slain. But Edmund declared that in the interests of science he ought at least to photograph him with a flash-light; and we did pause long enough for that, hovering over the place with the car, but the picture when developed showed nothing but a blur.

No other adventure happened at once, and we saw no more of the strange inhabitants of the fens, who had probably been scared off by the noise and the light.

For a long time we bore away in the darkness, without any guide except a general sense of direction. In that respect Edmund was the most remarkable person I have ever known. It seemed impossible for him to be lost. He could make his way through the air like a migrating bird.

After a long while it began to grow a little lighter ahead. I though that we had inadvertently turned on our course and were approaching the temperate zone; but Edmund averred that he had not lost his direction, and that the light must come from some other source. Before the darkness around us had begun perceptibly to lift I happened to glance out of one of the windows, and noticed a strange fluttering in the air.

Huge inky shadows seemed to be flitting through the gloom.

Strange Shadows

PRESENTLY there came a smart blow against the car, and for an instant something covered the window. Everybody was greatly startled, and we looked out at both sides, but could see nothing, except the curious shadows that I had first noticed.

The air was misty around us; and the shadows, except for their blackness, resembled apparitions like the spectre of the Brocken, cut upon the dark fog by moving objects, whose position we could not immediately determine.

"There is something odd overhead," said Edmund at length, "and I'll steer a little higher to see what it is."

No sooner had the car started gliding on an upward slope than a perfect thunder of raps began on the outside, like heavy hail on a roof. At the same time both of the windows were covered by moving forms, the nature of which we could not determine, so fast did they flit by.

But it was evident that they were hitting the car and causing the noise. Suddenly the rapping ceased and the forms disappeared from the windows. But now again the ebon shadows began fluttering in the mist all about the car.

"What has become of those things, and what are they, anyhow?" demanded Jack nervously. Owing to his comparative helplessness, he was no doubt more startled and alarmed than he would otherwise have been.

"I don't know what they are," Edmund replied; "but I do know that they are overhead again, and I'm going to keep the car rising until I find out what the mystery means."

"But what makes the shadows?" I asked. "Where does the light come from?"

"Of course it must come from above," Edmund replied, "since the shadows are below our level and appear all around us. I take it that the sun is breaking through the clouds overhead. But what the objects are that cast the shadows I can't guess. That they are very much alive, and that their name

is legion, are facts which require no demonstration after our recent experience."

All this time we were rising, and in a few moments the strange phenomenon recurred. The thunder of blows again fell upon the car, and the indistinguishable rush by the windows was resumed. Ala turned slightly pale, her maids cowered together, Henry hid his face, and even Edmund seemed disconcerted.

"It's very strange," he muttered. "I'll have to turn on the search-light."

A Flock of Bats

THIS had been extinguished upon the closing of the glass of the window when we resumed our journey, Edmund not taking the trouble then to replace the apparatus at the forward lookout. He now put the light in its original position, and, as its brilliant beam sprang out into the darkness, placed himself close by the small opening. After a moment of intense gazing he looked back over his shoulder with a queer expression.

Catching my eye, he beckoned to me, and I went to his side.

"Look out there!" he said in a low voice.

As I did so I was unable to repress an exclamation. The shaft of light fell upon thousands of huge flapping wings, belonging to what I can only liken to enormous bats, which were whirling about the car and blindly striking by hundreds against it, as they rushed on in an endless procession.

Soon it became apparent that they were revolving in a vast circle; and their previous sudden disappearance was explained when, as if at a signal, they all turned their flight upward and rose again above the level of the car.

The things looked so uncanny that I shuddered at the recollection of the sight, while Edmund seemed lost in thought.

"What is it?" called out Jack impatiently from his bench. "What do you see?"

While I was trying to frame an answer Edmund spoke up in words that filled me with surprise.

"It's the next step to Hades, I reckon," is what he said.

Jack didn't catch his drift, and I had to think a moment before I asked:

"What in the world do you mean?"

"I mean this," replied Edmund, seizing one of the knobs and giving it a sudden turn. "We've got to get up out of here before the tempest strikes us."

"You don't think that they can harm us, do you?" I said, with my mind on the flying creatures.

"Not they, but what they announce. Hold on tight now, for I am going to make her spin."

Before touching the knob again, he took Ala by the hand and made her sit on one of the benches, showing her how to hold herself firmly in position. Then he planted himself by his controllers, and a moment later we felt the car bound upward.

A Tempest on Venus

BUT the warning which Edmund had read in the conduct of the gigantic birds had come too late. We shot through their array, knocking them right and left by thousands as we rushed upward; but the deafening sound thus created was nothing to the awful uproar that immediately succeeded.

I turned dizzy as the car began to spin and plunge like a cork in a whirlpool.

We were caught in a tempest with a vengeance! It was getting lighter outside, but the light was more fearful than the darkness. It was a lurid red gleam that made the boiling clouds which surged against the windows resemble foam upon a sea of blood whipped to madness by furiously battling winds.

All that we had experienced in the terrible passage of the crystal mountains was child's play to this!

The howling and shrieking of the wind was enough to drive one mad. It seemed to blow a dozen ways at once. The car rolled, bobbed, tossed, and plunged, and, despite all our efforts, we were flung upon the floor, striking against one another, grasping at supports, out of breath, helpless with terror, all shouting at intervals and nobody hearing a word in the hubbub of noises.

Edmund abandoned all efforts to control the car, and devoted himself to saving Ala as much as he could.

He held her in his arms, and braced himself in a corner where two of the benches running along the walls met. Even in that terible excitement I noticed a look of confidence in her face as she fixed her eyes upon Edmund. Jack suffered fearfully from the shocks he received, and I did my best to aid him.

Once I caught Edmund's eye, and he glanced meaningly upward, which I took for an intimation that the car was still rising, and that he looked for deliverance from our peril in that way. But there were certainly times when we plunged downward with fearful speed, for we would be almost lifted from the floor by the inertia.

This dreadful scene may have lasted an hour, or it may have lasted not more than twenty minutes; but it seemed endless. The change came with great suddenness.

One moment we were rolling and pitching, as usual, and the next—it was all over.

The Danger Over

THE car seemed to have been struck dead, it was so absolutely motionless. At the same instant the howling of the wind passed away in a dying scream. My ears rang still with the echo, and I was too dizzy to stand straight.

In a few moments it became evident that the motionlessness of the car was only apparent. We were still rising. Edmund gently placed Ala on a bench and went to the controllers. After turning a couple of knobs, he faced about with a cheering smile.

"We are out of it," he said. "There is no more danger. The only thing there was to do was to keep on rising. We are now above the denser part of the atmosphere, and the cyclones are whirling far beneath us. I will bring the car to rest, and if I am not mistaken you will look down upon a scene that you will not soon forget.

"I cannot open the air-tight glass shutters," he continued, "because at the elevation where we now are the air is too rare especially for Ala and her friends—but by inclining the car a little to one side we can have a good view."

There was an arrangement of movable weights

sliding upon bars to produce an inclination toward one side or the other; and in a few minutes Edmund had the car, which was now practically at rest, so canted that one of the large windows afforded a view almost directly downward.

An Amazing View from the Air

THE spectacle beneath drove the memory of an awful experience, for the moment, from the minds of all. The sun was shining brilliantly overhead, and its light fell upon a raging sea of clouds, which, except at their edges, where they were torn into flying scud, looked as dense as white molten metal.

A hundred tornadoes appeared to be whizzing at once, all turning in the same direction with sickening velocity; and where these whirlwinds came together, their peripheries moving opposite ways, it was as if two gigantic buzz-saws had met, each plowing the other to pieces and whirling the fragments round in the wildest confusion. The play of lightning was fierce and incessant; but when we were in the midst of it, it had passed unnoticed, the thunder being blended with the roar of the wind.

"Good Heavens!" cried Jack, holding himself painfully erect at the window. "Did we come through that?"

"Indeed we did," replied Edmund, "and I don't mind saying that I shouldn't like to venture such a trip again."

"But what does it all mean?" I asked.

"Its meaning is clear enough. In penetrating toward the torrid circle, where the unsetting sun is forever in the zenith, we have entered the zone of tempests that surrounds it. The heated air is always rising above the area enclosed in the central circle and flowing off above on all sides.

"Colder air rushes in below to take its place; and at a certain distance from the center, which we have reached, the contending currents come together with the results that you see."

Ala, who had resumed all of her usual self command, was one of the most eager of the watchers of this spectacle, and Edmund and she communed together for a long time, pointing out and discussing the marvelous features of the scene.

At last I asked Edmund:

"What do you mean to do next? Go back?"

"No," he replied. "At least, we'll not go back the way we came. Having got so far, I think we'll circumnavigate the planet and take a bird's-eye look at it. Jack seems to be getting along pretty well, and by keeping near the upper limit of the atmosphere we can travel so fast that the whole trip will not occupy more than twenty-four hours."

"That's it," cried Jack; "that suits me exactly. To go back the way we came would look as if we had been beaten."

The talk of going back set my mind once more on the dangers that were probably gathering for us at the capital, and I could not refrain from saying quietly to Edmund:

"You know you ought to get back as soon as possible, for I am sure there are plots hatching that may have terrible consequences. Remember that the eagle beak on the black throne is against us, and our absence with Ala leaves him a free field. Ingra, too, is at liberty?"

But Edmund only smiled at my gloomy forebodings.

"You borrow too much trouble," he said.

But neither he in his buoyant optimism, nor I with my half-defined suspicions, foresaw what was coming.

CHAPTER XXI.

The Land of Night Again

ALTHOUGH the sun was now continually overhead and entirely unclouded, we did not suffer from its heat, because we were running at so great an elevation that the air was rarer than on the loftiest terrestrial mountain, and the rays that struck the outside of the polished car were reflected off without penetrating.

But on the planet below us, buried in its blanket of heavy air, the effect of the intense and unceasing solar radiation was terrific. We had already seen one of its results in the belt of cyclones, but as we passed over that and entered the central torrid circle, we beheld, if possible, still more dreadful indications of the merciless action of the sun.

When we had left the region of clouds and storms behind, the bare surface of the planet became visible, and Edmund kept one side of the car inclined downward to give us a better view from the window.

A Desert on Venus

WE were many miles above the ground, and the smaller details were not visible even with our binoculars; but we did not dare to drop lower because of the heat, which, in spite of our great distance, came to our faces, even through the thick glass, like the blast of a furnace.

Evidently, no life could exist on that scorched surface, and not a drop of water could stay there. Millions of square miles of land lay literally *roasting*, and its prevailing dark-brick color suggested the idea that it was red-hot.

There was no temptation to linger here, and in a short while we rose entirely above the atmosphere, in order, as Edmund said, to make it safe for him to turn the "interplanetary knob," and set the car going at a speed of more than a mile a second. In this way the transit of the torrid circle, though it was thousands of miles broad, was effected in an hour, and upon approaching the opposite border we saw again the ring of swirling clouds that encloses it all round.

Jack, who was now rapidly recovering the use of his limbs, stood with us most of the time at the window; and as he saw the clouds passing far beneath, the thought seemed for the first time to strike his mind that in circumnavigating the planet we should once more visit the scene of our first adventure on the dark hemisphere.

"By Jove, Edmund," he suddenly sang out, "we'll have to cross those mountains again!"

"Of course we will," said Edmund, "but it will be a simple matter now. We'll go miles above their tops."

"And, hooray! We'll visit the caverns," Jack went on, with rising spirits. "Juba, old boy," slapping him on the latter's hairy back, "you are going to see your old home once more, do you understand?

But we won't leave you there. No, sirree! We can't part with *you*. I want to see you in New York once."

"But, if Juba should want to stay with his friends —" I began.

"Then, he'll have to stay," Edmund interrupted gravely. "And I am going to advise him to stay."

"Aw, Juba won't want to stay," said Jack, laughing. "He likes our company too well."

But Edmund's words and manner set me to worrying again about what was going on behind our backs at the capital; and I was impatient to return and have it out, and then get away for good.

Edmund saw the trend of my thoughts—I believe he was beginning to acquire something of Ala's power of mind-reading—and he said to me, in an aside:

"Don't be so down-hearted. It'll come out all right. Keep your courage up, and help me with the others."

We passed over the storm-zone at high speed, and then came the temperate, or inhabited, zone; but the part of it now beneath our eyes was on the opposite side of the planet from the capital. It appeared to be dotted with villages; and occasionally the towers of a considerable city were visible. Ala, however, informed Edmund that this portion of Venus was mainly devoted to agriculture, and contained no great towers. We were so high that the airplanes in sight seemed to be crawling upon the ground.

Leaving the Night Hemisphere

ANOTHER belt of clouds ahead soon reminded us that we were rapidly approaching the borders of the night hemisphere, and our expectations became eagerly alive. Ala, especially, was nervously excitable over the prospect.

Now, at last, she was to enter that mysterious country which none of her people had ever succeeded in penetrating, and concerning which so many superstitions and traditions existed. The majestic majordomo, who had behaved with commendable equanimity through all of our adventures thus far, showed a little nervousness, I thought, when Ala explained to him what was about to happen. I watched Juba closely, but his face was impassive.

The night hemisphere, you will remember, is ringed outside the crystal mountains by another zone of tempests and a broad sea into which the rivers periodically formed by the melting ice pour. We were now so high that the storms did not trouble us; and we admired, at our leisure, the shining expanse of sea surface, whitened with foam, that showed through shifting breaks in the tempestuous clouds.

Presently, Edmund, who had been watching from the lookout, slowed down and swung the car halfway round.

"Now's your chance," he said. "Take a look at the mountains before we cross them."

We all crowded round the window. There they lay, those terrific ice peaks, in a long glittering line upon the horizon. Their tops were wreathed in straggling clouds, through which occasionally darted a diamond-bright flash where the level sunlight was reflected from some smooth flank of pure ice.

"I wonder if we can see the place where we were imprisoned by the fall of the car?" said Jack.

"No," Edmund replied. "That is over on the other side. Remember we are approaching the dark hemisphere at a point opposite to where we left it."

"But the snow mountains seem just the same here."

An Arctic Cold on Venus

"TO be sure. Why shouldn't they be the same? The planet is completely ringed with them, for the moisture-laden air flows off equally on all sides of the globe."

We were already at such an elevation that we could clear the mountains and the stormy air that raged above their heads; and Edmund, after fifteen minutes stoppage, resumed the journey. Gradually a marvelous scene opened around us.

The air seemed to darken, and the stars began to appear. These grew brighter as the night deepened, and soon they glowed with incredible brilliancy. It was so long since my eyes had beheld them, that I was astonished by their brightness and their multitude. But the effect upon Ala and her attendants was indescribable.

You must remember that none of them had ever seen a star before, and now suddenly they beheld thousands. They could not comprehend the meaning of the wonderful spectacle. It was such a revelation of the universe as they had never dreamed of.

When we had passed completely within the realm of darkness, with the crystal mountains once more flaming in fiery shapes behind us, Edmund brought the car to rest.

He had already started the electric heaters and clothed Ala in furs, and now the rest of us got out our arctic garments from the lockers.

"I am now preparing to drop down to the ground," Edmund said, "in order to take our bearings. A few observations of the stars will enable me to orient myself, and then we can set out with confidence in search of the caverns."

The descent was made rapidly, and then, in our warm clothing, we stepped out of the car upon the icy shingle.

Ala shivered at the touch of the glacial air, and her maids and the majordomo quickly fled back into the shelter of the car. But Edmund wished Ala to remain outside, and he doubled the furs covering her until she intimated that she no longer felt any discomfort from the cold. Then he got out his instruments of observation.

But first he pointed out the earth and the moon to Ala. That was a thrilling moment to all of us!

How splendid our old planet looked up there, and how proud we felt as we watched Edmund endeavoring to make his companion comprehend what it was that she saw. I think that he succeeded, at least so far that she understood that it was *our* world which shone so splendidly overhead.

"Do you understand what this means?" asked Edmund, suddenly turning to me.

"I understand that that is the earth, of course," I replied.

"But, are you not surprised to find it still so high overhead here?"

Then the truth burst upon me.

A Year of the Venus Calendar

"WHY, yes!" I exclaimed; "it means that a whole year has elapsed since we arrived upon

Venus. She has gone round her orbit, and come back into conjunction with the earth."

"More than a year," Edmund replied. "Some five hundred and eighty days; for that is about the time from one conjunction to the next."

"Do you mean to say that we have been here almost twenty months?" cried Jack.

"There is the evidence," Edmund responded. "Astronomy doesn't lie."

"Well," said Jack, "it's the shortest twenty months in my experience."

Henry, after his fashion, said nothing, but looked gloomy and disgruntled in the glare of the electric light streaming from the car.

Having finished his observations, Edmund announced that he now knew his course and could take us directly to the caverns of Juba's people. But, before entering the car, he took Ala again by the arm, and they stood together for a long time, gazing up at the earth and the stars, while he communed with her, telling her, in that strange language, I know not what marvelous things which must have been revelations of enormous significance to her intelligence.

I can see them yet, standing there side by side, and I can recall the very expression of her beautiful eyes, peering out of the hooding furs, as she drank in his thoughts, with a look of mingled love, and admiration, and confidence.

At length we reentered the car and, rising to a moderate elevation, resumed our journey at a rapid pace. The pathless frozen desert beneath us glittered occasionally in the starlight, and after a long time we caught sight of the well-remembered shafts of light rising from the ground.

"We are getting into the inhabited region," said Edmund. "We shall have to search a little for landmarks," he added, "because, of course, my observations are not as accurate as those of a geodetic survey, and I cannot locate the precise position of Juba's caverns. But I can come very close to them, and I depend upon Juba himself to aid in finding the exact spot."

Since our arrival in the dark hemisphere I had frequently studied Juba's countenance, and I detected many signs of the interest that the poor fellow experienced in finding himself once more in his own land. Still, it seemed to me that Jack was right, and that Juba would prefer to stay with us than to remain with his people.

The Caverns Once More

WE passed over several groups of inhabited caverns, but we saw no signs of life except the light shafts issuing upward.

We now ran close to the surface, and kept a sharp outlook. Suddenly Juba slapped his hairy hands with an expression of delight, and pointed to a row of lights which he seemed to recognize.

"That's it," said Edmund. "I was sure he would know when he was at home."

There was no mistake about it. Juba had recognized his own village, so to speak, probably by the arrangement of the shafts. In a little while, we ourselves became aware of a certain familiar aspect of the landscape, and, almost without hesitation, we approached the mouth of *our own* cavern. Then we came softly down to the ground, and the door was thrown open.

"Hold on," said Jack "let's give them a surprise. Let's fire a gun in salute."

Edmund made no objection, and Jack, who had almost entirely recovered his activity, fired the signal.

As the sound rattled through the frozen air, we waited with great curiosity, standing within a few rods of the terrible altar on which I had nearly been sacrificed.

Presently, two or three hairy heads appeared at the cavern's mouth. Juba immediately ran toward them. They disappeared like frightened rabbits, and Juba dashed down the steps in pursuit. We halted at the top to let him soothe the fears of his compatriots. In a short time he reappeared with a dozen companions.

Evidently he had explained the situation, and I was rather surprised at the apparent indifference with which they greeted us. We seemed much more glad to see them than they were to see us. I recognized several well-known faces among them.

Then, accompanied by Ala and her attendants, we descended, escorted by Juba, who seemed to take great pride in leading us. Arrived at the first underground apartment, we found a great crowd of the hairy natives assembled.

Juba Meets His Friends

THE women were more cordial in their greetings than the men, and seemed especially interested in Ala and her maids. I expected to see some indications of concern over the fate of those who had been lost in the flood, but I observed none; and I do not really know whether or not any explanation of their absence was given by Juba.

While most of our party remained in this chamber, Edmund took Ala and the majordomo on an exploration of the deeper parts of the cavern. Ala expressed the greatest interest in everything she saw. Edmund told me that he showed her the coal-mines, the black-smith shop, and all the curiosities of the place.

But there was no reason for lingering there, and, as soon as Edmund had completed his circuit, preparations were made for our departure. Then Edmund took Juba aside and tried, as he had said he would, to persuade the fellow to remain with his own people. But Juba was deaf to all arguments; and at last Edmund, throwing up his hands, said:

"Well, it's no use. Juba is determined to go back with us; so we'll have to take him."

Poor Juba!

I often think of him now. How infinitely better it would have been for him if he had not been so fond of the strangers who had dropped into his gloomy world out of the starry sky!

CHAPTER XXII.

At the Capital

I NEED not detain you with an account of our return trip.

Edmund again laid his course by the stars, and running at a high elevation we passed over the crystal mountains and their warring tempests, believing that we could recognize with our glasses the

huge jeweled peak that had once so nearly wrought our destruction. Edmund pointed this out to Ala, as she clung to his arm; and then we crossed the sea where we had first met her, and were soon coursing under the great cloud-dome in the land of filtered sunshine.

Upon reaching the capital, the same scenes of jubilation were renewed; but there was great surprise at our reappearing from exactly the opposite direction to that in which we had been expected. An airplane was at once despatched to recall those who were waiting for us on the border of the twilight zone.

There can be no doubt that the forebodings which had so long occupied my mind tended to color my judgment, yet I would have sworn that I detected a change in the moral atmosphere of the capital. Our greeting from the people was hearty, as usual, but there were faces which seemed to me to wear a half-concealed scowl; and I caught, occasionally, an unfriendly glance in the crowd.

These things impressed me so deeply that again I warned Edmund.

"The current is beginning to run against us," I told him. "I am sure of it."

This time he did not laugh at my fears. On the contrary, he said:

"Yes, I believe you are right. But I am not afraid. We have weathered worse storms."

"But, what will you do?"

"Let events take their course, and watch them."

"Then you may be too late. Listen to me. Prepare the car, get Ala's consent to go, for I believe she would follow you anywhere, and start for the earth at the earliest possible moment."

Edmund mused a little while; then he said:

"The day after to-morrow."

"The day after to-morrow?" I replied impatiently. "Why trifle thus? You know that there are no days and to-morrows in this kind of endless light."

Edmund smiled.

"Count forty-eight hours by your watch," he said, "and at the end of that time, I promise you to start."

This promise heartened me immensely. But I did not know what that "day after to-morrow" had in store. The blow was nearer falling than I could have suspected.

It was hastened without doubt, by an occurrence which nobody could foresee or govern, and which, if it had happened at the time of our first arrival, would probably have had no mischievous consequences for us.

But, since that fatal interview in the temple, all was changed; and an event more disastrous for us than that which now occurred, Ingra himself could not have devised.

The Opening of the Cloud Dome

IT was the opening of the cloud-dome!

I have already told you that at certain unpredictable times a rift appeared in the pearly vault of the heavens, and the sun for a few minutes blazed down through the opening in unclouded splendor. So many years had elapsed since the last occurrence of this phenomenon, that for the younger generation it was only a tradition; yet it was a tradition on which the pagan religious system—of which the eagle-faced sphinx in the red-lighted temple was the head-center—was based; and its influence upon the ignorant and superstitious multitude was unbounded and irresistible.

This terrible priest, whose hatred of us had, of course, been stimulated by Ala's open defiance, had, as I feared, occupied the time of our absence in poisoning as many minds as possible against us; and his sacred character had enabled him to spread the venom of religious prejudice with amazing rapidity. Even if we had not wasted time on our unfortunate expedition, I do not know that we could have done much to counteract his pernicious influence; but then, at least, we should have been ready at an earlier date to escape from his clutches.

And who knows what Ala, with her great popularity might have accomplished if she had been on the ground? I did not doubt for a moment that Ingra was in the capital, and thick in the plot.

The opening of the dome came very suddenly. It was announced by a great shout—a rare occurrence—from the people who happened to be on the outer platforms of the palace tower.

We were all with Ala at the time, Edmund being engaged in trying to decipher the curious characters in a large book which she had brought him.

Upon hearing the shout, we all ran out.

The scene was one of the most unforgettable things that occurred in our whole expedition. Excited people were crowding the platforms, jostling one another, jabbering, pushing, and pointing upward; some already on their knees, others with looks of the utmost consternation, throwing their arms wildly above their heads, while hundreds of airplanes were circling like frightened birds above the towers.

The Venerians See the Sun

I glanced upward, following the direction of thousands of eyes, and was momentarily blinded by the fierce glare of the sun, pouring its unmitigated rays straight down through a narrow rift in the cloud-dome.

The gold and jewels that decorated the tower made it blaze with a splendor like that of a huge frost-gemmed tree struck by the morning rays after a winter night's ice-storm. It was too dazzling to look upon.

Then there was a movement in the vast throng, a space cleared itself, and the gigantic augur, wearing a great black miter flaming with circles of rubies and carbuncles, appeared, his strange beak projecting ominously and his black eyes aglow.

Thousands instantly dropped on their knees as he slowly advanced. With one long arm carrying a sort of crozier, he pointed aloft, while he muttered a chant that fell like a charm upon the superstitious multitude.

I glanced at Ala.

She did not stir; and I felt my heart give an exultant bound, with the conviction which flashed over me that her active, penetrating mind had flung off the burden of this superstition. How much Edmund had been able to teach her, I do not know; but I gave him all credit for the change.

Soon the terrible priest directed his menacing glance upon us, as we continued standing after all the others had abjectly fallen before him.

If his eyes had glared before, they turned to living flames now. With a majestic stride, he advanced toward Ala; and I thought for a moment that he meant to strike her down with his staff. Edmund pushed her behind him; and I shall never cease to thrill at the recollection that I, with a boldness that surprised and gratified me afterward, sprang instantly to Edmund's side, with Jack—brave old Jack at my elbow.

What we should have done next I do not know for our enemy hesitated.

An Anathema

WHETHER he was cowered by our menacing aspect, or whether he thought it unbecoming his dignity to attack us physically, at any rate, he stopped short. Then, towering to his full height, he made one vast sweep with his arms, and covered us, I suppose, with a withering anathema.

As far as he was concerned, that apparently ended it.

He paid us no more attention after that than if we had been so many sticks, but directed his gaze straight at the sun. I saw its rays sparkle in the corner of his black eyes, which never winked; and I hope I may be forgiven for wishing, as I did, that his god would strike him blind on the spot!

As I glanced around, I caught side looks from the prostrate worshippers which boded no good.

Suddenly a cold hand seemed to have been planted over the pit of my stomach, for there, lifting his head above the kneeling crowd and staring at us with a wicked grin, was Ingra! An instant later, and before I could speak to Edmund, he was gone.

This capped the climax of my apprehensions. The mere fact that Ingra dared to show himself here attested the change that had occurred in our situation. After a moment's thought, I determined not to tell Edmund at present what I had seen.

The spectacle of the opening of the dome ended as unexpectedly as it had begun. The rift closed, and then, for a few moments, the contrast between the unclouded brilliance of the sun and the soft glow that succeeded had an effect as if we had been plunged into night.

Finally, objects became clearer, there was a great movement of the closely packed throng, the people rose from their knees, and the black priest had gone as mysteriously as if he had been snatched up into the sky.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Blow Falls

AFTER the scene that I have tried to describe in the last chapter, events hurried on with a rapidity which was not apparent upon their surface.

I believe that Edmund, with all his perspicacity, failed to appreciate their meaning. In fact, he was himself responsible for giving them an impetus toward the inevitable crisis, which, but for the premature step that he and Ala took, might have been delayed considerably.

But I shall come to that in a few minutes.

As the excitement of the crowd died down, the people began to move about in groups, communing together about the marvel that they had witnessed. The unfavorable attitude toward us was spreading among them.

It was plain that it had grown enormously in strength since the scene with the augur, and the impression quickly reached those who had not been near enough to see for themselves.

I could not speak immediately to Edmund, because he was continually in conference with Ala; but getting Jack aside, in order not to alarm Henry, who was already in a pitiable state of moral collapse, I opened my mind to him.

"Jack," I said, "Edmund has promised to get away soon."

"Well, that'll be a good thing, I reckon," was the reply.

"What do you think of the sentiment of this crowd?"

"I shouldn't like to trust myself alone in it. But, say! Didn't we back the old medicine-man down in great shape?"

"I don't think we backed him down at all," I replied. "He has better ways of ruining us than by attacking us with a big stick.

"Humph!" said Jack. "I'd have had the drop on him, if he'd made another move."

"But you are in favor of our getting away at the earliest possible moment?"

"Oh, yes; I think we'd better go. I've had enough of Venus. But I'm not for backing down. If Edmund can take Ala along, all right. That's a little romance that's got to go through."

"We've got the religious sentiments of these people against us now," I said, "and we can't afford to stay an unnecessary minute."

The Danger Thickens

"THEIR religious sentiments be hanged!" exclaimed Jack. "What's their religion? A set of pagans! But, by Jove, these girls of Venus are great. I only wish I could have had Edmund's luck."

"He may not be as lucky as he seems," I replied. "But, come, Jack, I want you to help me persuade Edmund to start even sooner than he has promised—in fact, right away."

Jack stared at me a moment.

"See here, Albert," he said. "I'm with you in thinking that the sooner we're off the better, but I'm not for budging a step until Edmund gives the word. He knows his affairs and Ala's.

"When they're ready, off we go, as far as I'm concerned. But that girl has got to be left to choose her time; and, if Edmund wants to stay and become King of Venus, I'm not the man to coax him away."

There was no more to be made out of Jack. I thought it would do no good to tell him that Ingra was here, for probably he would be all the more eager to stay and fight it out.

At the first opportunity, however, I brought Edmund back to the subject of getting away. He saw what was in my mind before I could speak.

"What does your watch say?" he asked good-naturedly. "Is it day after to-morrow yet?"

"No, of course not; but listen, Edmund. Don't you see how the peril thickens around us? I protest that I am no coward; but it would be defying fate to stay here any longer. Can't you persuade Ala to go at once?"

Edmund paused a minute before replying; and

then he said, with some embarrassment of manner:

"I promised you to start in forty-eight hours. I thought that it could be managed, else I shouldn't have promised; but things have taken another turn. Ala refuses to go; and you know," laying his hand on my arm, "that *I can't leave her.*"

Edmund's Determination

"BUT what do you propose, then; to stay here all your life?"

"That's it!"

There was no trace of regret in his tone. It was plain that henceforth this, and not his mother earth, was to be Edmund's world.

Before I could say anything in reply, he went on:

"But, of course, I don't mean to keep you and Jack and Henry here. I am going to show you exactly how to manage the car; and I feel sure that you can navigate her home as well as I could myself."

The idea of parting from Edmund, of leaving him alone on this distant planet while we returned to the earth, had never crossed my mind. Now, coming so suddenly, it quite overwhelmed me.

I had long ago forgotten to feel the least resentment because he had practically kidnapped us and brought us way off here against our knowledge and against our will. It seemed to me like desertion to leave him, and I could not reconcile myself to the thought.

I felt a lump rising in my throat; and it would not surprise me if there were tears in my eyes.

"But, Edmund, I finally managed to say, "you can't stay, you know, and Ala can't stay. The lives of both of you will be sacrificed. Your enemies are too numerous and too powerful."

"No," he replied cheerfully. "We shall run no great danger. Ala believes that she can stem the tide; and I believe it, too, for there never was another such a woman! She proposes that we meet the machinations of the chief priest with a counterstroke."

"What sort of counterstroke can you deal?"

"You know how popular Ala has always been, and you know also how charmed the whole population was with the news of our romance. It is the ingrained nature of these children of the sun. They passionately love the romantic and the beautiful.

"We believe that we can overcome the opposition of the superstitious element and rouse enthusiastic devotion to ourselves, by publicly proclaiming our betrothal, and celebrating our nuptials at the earliest possible moment; and we are going to do it."

I was struck dumb—the thing was so unexpected and, to my mind, so preposterous.

"Why, Edmund," I at last managed to say," "that's the very thing to bring your enemies down upon you.

"If you are determined to stay here on Venus, all right. For Heaven's sake don't take a step so openly defiant as that which you propose. Keep in the background, and get Ala to try her arts of persuasion until the storm blows over."

Nothing that I could urge moved him. He and Ala had made up their minds, and that was the end of it.

He wound up the discussion by asking me to go at once to the car, in order that he might instruct me in the management of the controllers. Ala, as well as Jack, Henry, and Juba, accompanied us.

The mere knowledge of Ingra's presence was sufficient to make Edmund wish to have Ala continually under his eye; and the others followed where they saw us going. The lesson was not long, for already I had a general idea of the management of the machinery; but it was rendered a little difficult by the tacit understanding between Edmund and me that Henry should not be told what was in the wind.

He would be glad enough to go home, but we were sure that he would oppose any one acting as engineer except Edmund. The affair was managed without exciting Henry's suspicions. Afterward, I got Jack aside and told him the whole story.

As I expected, he adopted Edmund's view at once.

"Just the thing to do," he declared. "But, I tell you what, I'm more than half disposed to stay here myself, if Edmund does."

"Do as you like, Jack," I replied; "but I'm going to get away just as soon as I am certain that Edmund and Ala cannot, after all, be persuaded to go, and that they are in no immediate danger."

You are not to suppose, from what I have said, that Ala was deserted by her people in the midst of the serious trouble in which she and we had involved ourselves. Her self-confidence, as exhibited in the plan which she had formed with Edmund, was alone a sufficient indication that she had plenty of friends left, and that her rank and character still protected her.

The Betrothal

AS soon, then, as she had informed these friends and faithful supporters of her design, they loyally aided her to put it into execution. At a less anxious moment I should have eagerly examined into all the details of the singular ceremony by which the betrothal of the queen to a stranger of another race and from another world was to be proclaimed to her people. As it was, my mind was too full, and only the culminating scene was stamped on my memory.

The immense palace-tower and hundreds of other towers all over the city were decorated as we had never seen them before. The display of color was amazing, even after our experience.

Most beautiful of all, I thought, was the spectacle presented by the thousands of airplanes and airships in gala dress. They spiraled about, so countless and so brilliant, so swift and so graceful in their mazy circlings, that one seemed to be plunged into the midst of a vast swarm of the most gorgeous butterflies.

So dazzling and fascinating a spectacle was never conceived by the most ingenious inventor of carnivals and ballets.

But even while I stood admiring it I could not drive away the thought that this wonderful display was, in itself, simply a defiance to our enemies, the waving of the toreador's scarlet flag, and I shuddered at consequences which I could not foresee.

The hour for the final ceremony was now close at hand, and we were all to take a conspicuous part in it, standing with Ala and Edmund to receive the congratulations of the people, after a priest, whom

Ala had won over to her side, had publicly proclaimed their betrothal.

Ala, beautiful as I had never yet seen her, was already habited in white garments glittering with diamonds, and Edmund had been fitted out in appropriate dress which splendidly set off his magnificent figure, with a jeweled fillet resting amid his dark curls.

Preparing to Return to the Earth

WHILE we waited thus in one of the upper apartments of the palace-tower an irresistible impulse came to me to examine the car, which had been removed to a neighboring tower. I do not know why I suddenly felt this desire—it may have been some suspicion of possible meddling by Ingra—but, at any rate, I immediately yielded to it.

I had a key to the chamber in which the car was locked, and I said to Edmund, who was in high spirits:

"I want to run over to look at the car."

"All right," he replied, "but you must be back in a quarter of an hour, without fail."

"I'll be back," I responded, and summoned an air-boat waiting at the landing.

Jack and Henry at once expressed a desire to accompany me, and I consented. We were not a minute in crossing the space separating the palace from the adjoining tower, and while Jack and Henry remained on the landing of the latter, admiring the scene before them, I approached the locked chamber containing the car. As I put the key in the door I asked myself:

"What am I here for? I'm hanged if I know. But, anyhow, I'll take a look."

I opened the door and entered. The car was apparently all right, and, while I was looking it over with no particular design, I heard Jack's voice raised in great excitement.

I ran to the door, and a gush of heat smote me in the face. A single glance showed me that the palace was in flames! Vast tongues of fire were leaping up from its lower stories, licking the innumerable brilliant balconies, which burst into flame as if they had been so much tinder.

Stunned for an instant by the awful sight, the next moment I leaped into the air-boat, pushing Jack and Henry before me, but even as we did this the material of the boat caught fire, and its engineer sprang back upon the platform of the tower.

"Quick!" I shouted. "We must get the car out.

We dashed into the apartment containing it, and now the value of Edmund's recent instructions was shown. But for them I should never have been able to manage it in such an emergency.

Madly we pushed it out into the furnace of heat, for our own tower had caught fire, and, as we sprang inside, I turned on the power. We rose like a shot out of the flame and smoke.

Immediately I swung round on the other side of the palace opposite to that where we had been. Here, as I hoped, the flames had not yet mounted to the level that they had attained on the other side. But a sight met my eyes that, for a moment, drove me mad with rage.

The Conflagration

THERE, with a single steersman in an air-boat, was Ingra, torch in hand, spreading the conflagration! Forgetting in my fury what I had come for, I drove the car straight against him. He turned with startled eyes, and saw us bearing down upon him. He read death in my face, and his own grew pale.

Desperately he endeavored to evade the encounter, but the steel car struck his boat like a ram, crushed in its side, and sent Ingra and his unfortunate companion spinning into the flames below.

I exulted over the deed! I felt an unholy joy in having at last wrought vengeance upon this monster.

Then the thought of the time I had lost flashed upon me like an accusation.

"In Heaven's name!" I cried. "We must save Edmund and Ala!"

"And Juba!" shouted Jack.

I turned the car, and sped for the platform on which I knew that they must be.

We saw them! But—Heaven forgive me!—we were too late!

My vengeance had been purchased at an awful price. A minute earlier we might have saved them, but now they were in the midst of the flames. Edmund had Ala in his arms, and Juba, his long hair catching the sparks, stood resolutely beside them.

Edmund saw me, and, as I live, he smiled. He opened his lips, but in the awful roar of the fire I could not hear his voice.

Then he raised his hand, and seemed to be waving us off. He pointed upward, as if commanding us to go.

"I'll save them yet!" I yelled between my set teeth, and rushed the car into the flames.

But at this instant the whole vast structure of the tower gave way.

It crumbled like a pile of ashes, and they were gone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Earth

FOR a few minutes after this terrible consummation none of us spoke a word. Henry had swooned. Jack stood motionless by my side.

Where the tower had been, and the leaping flames had raged, was a vast vacuity, with wreathes of smoke rising from far below.

The conflagration was now spreading all over the splendid city. A hundred towers were burning fiercely on all sides, the pointed flames licking the sky, and thousands of planes and air-ships that had also caught fire were dropping like flaming brands into the furnace.

The sight filled me at once with pity and with horror. I saw one large plane, filled with people, driven, in spite of the exertions of its engineers, directly over a burning tower. A long spire of flame reached up and touched it. It seemed to shrivel like a moth in a candle, and down it went with all its living freight.

"Get away from here!" cried Jack, at last recovering his voice.

I turned the car and we sped away.

For hours we rushed on, not particular to choose

our direction. Our only thought was to escape from this dreadful place. At last I slowed down to take our bearings.

We had left the doomed capital behind the horizon, and only the well-known expanse of land beneath, with a few airplanes sailing about over it, and the cloud-dome above our heads, reminded us that we were still on the planet Venus.

Back to Earth

I BROUGHT the car to rest and sat down with Jack to consult. We looked at each other for a time in silence. Then we both burst into tears.

When we recovered ourselves we got out some provisions and set the little table on which Edmund had served our first morning meal after leaving the earth. We were ravenous with hunger, but it was a sad repast.

Henry had to be forced to eat a few mouthfuls, for he was yet out of his head and kept up his strange mutterings. When the meal was finished Jack and I decided upon our course.

"There is no reason for staying here another hour," I said. "We must start at once for the earth."

"But are you sure that you can manage the car in open space?" Jack eagerly inquired.

"Yes; Edmund told me everything that needs to be done," and my eyes filled with tears as I spoke.

"Then let us go," said Jack solemnly.

We rose swiftly through the cloud-dome, and once more the magnificent spectacle of the great white globe was before us. As rapidly as possible I accelerated the speed of the car, and the huge planet seemed to sail away into space.

Once above the atmosphere the heavens turned black and the stars sprang out to view. There was the earth again shining brilliantly, with the moon close at her side, and I set our course for them.

After a while the indicator showed a speed of twenty miles a second.

"I hardly dare to work it up higher," I said, "but since Venus and the earth are now again in conjunction, the distance we have to travel is only about twenty-six million miles, and we can make it in a little over eleven and a half days."

"And the meteors?" suggested Jack.

"We shall have to trust to luck," I replied.

Oh, what a trip that was!

Our hearts were filled with sadness, for, upon my word, we thought more of Edmund and Ala and Juba than of the home to which we were returning.

Henry added to our trouble, for his mind became every hour more clouded. At length he grew violent in his insanity, and sometimes we were obliged to use force to prevent him from injuring himself.

We had arrived, according to my calculations, within a quarter of a million miles of the earth, and already we could begin to see many of its geographical features, when a crisis arose in Henry's case.

He had been quiet for a long time, and we had ceased to watch him as carefully as we should have done, when, quite unexpectedly, he was seized with a maniacal fit, and before a hand could be laid upon him he had thrown open one of the windows and precipitated himself out of it.

The First Death

HE leaped with such force that he shot several yards away from the car. I realized in a flash that he had gone to his death, for we could not recover him before his breath would be exhausted. It was necessary instantly to close the window, because the air was rushing out, and in a few seconds it would be all gone, and we could not replace it. The apparatus which Edmund had provided automatically purified the air in the car, and rendered it fit to be breathed over and over again for an indefinite time, but there was no means of making more air.

Already in the few seconds that the window had remained open the larger part of our supply of air had escaped, and the moment we had slammed the window back into its air-tight settings Jack and I gasped and sank almost helpless on the floor.

For several minutes we were unable to rise. At last I struggled to my feet and looked out of the window.

There floated Henry's body, accompanying us in our flight!

"Oh, Jack!" I said faintly. "I cannot bear this!"

"What is it?" he managed to whisper, painfully lifting himself to the window.

The instant he looked out he dropped back to the floor with a groan.

The thought of Henry following us was too horrible to be entertained. Desperately I turned a guiding wheel, and the car moved away on a different course. But with fascinated eyes I continued to watch the body of our friend until, a mere speck, it faded into the blackness of the sky.

Poor Henry! He had chosen a strange tomb, as deep as the heavens and as lasting. I shuddered at the thought that there he would continue to float forever, imperishable in germless space, unless, perhaps, his mother earth should draw him at last to her bosom, when, flashing for an instant with meteoric fire, his ashes would be scattered unperceived through the wide atmosphere.

The desperation of the situation in which I now found myself it is impossible to put into words. Jack, whose stoutness doubtless served to diminish his breathing capacity, continued lying on the floor, gasping and half asphyxiated. I myself was as weak as a child, yet I had to guide the car.

The End of Jack

WITHOUT thought of anything but the necessity of reaching the earth, or at least of getting within the limits of the atmosphere, at the earliest possible moment, I recklessly increased the speed. A few minutes' time saved might mean life for Jack. When I spoke to him he could not reply, but I saw that he was still breathing.

How that car did spin!

Before I was aware that we were so near I suddenly perceived a vast dark mass filling all the sky that was visible from the window. The earth! At last we were almost there. We must be at the upper limit of the atmosphere, and I dared not continue this speed any longer.

I slowed down as rapidly as I could, and not a minute too soon, for I could feel heat coming through the walls of the car, and at the same moment the stout glass in one of the windows cracked

(*Continued on page* 669)

The PURCHASE of the NORTH POLE

By Jules Verne

The noise was truly awful. The echoes rolled in thunders far beyond the realm of the Wamasai. There was a shrill shriek of the projectile which traversed the air under the impetus from milliards of milliards of litres of gas. . . . At the explosion Barbicane and Nicholl had been thrown down; so had the Sultan, and several thousand natives; . . .

What Has Gone Before

JULES VERNE has taken us to America. A rich widow in love with the mathematician backs a proposition to change the inclination of the earth's axis to the ecliptic, so as to bring it vertical thereto, then there will be no change of seasons; only day and night will be left. They anticipate that the North Pole will then be accessible and that they will find there great coal deposits. There is the usual share-holders' meeting and everything seems in a fair way to progress in great triumph. But a lightning stroke upsets the mathematical calculations.

THE PURCHASE OF THE NORTH POLE

By JULES VERNE

Part II

What Causes The Seasons?

In the first place, during the diurnal rotation of Jupiter, which occupies nine hours, fifty-five minutes, the days are always equal to the nights in all latitudes; that is to say, the Jovian day is four hours, fifty-seven minutes long, and the Jovian night lasts also four hours and fifty-seven minutes.

"There," said the admirers of Jovian existence, "you have something suited to people of regular habits. They will be delighted to submit to such regularity."

That is what would happen to the Earth if Barbicane did what he promised, only as the new axis would make no difference in the time of rotation, twenty-four hours would still separate the successive noons, and our spheroid would be blessed with nights and days each twelve hours long, and we would live in a perpetual equinox.

"But the climatal phenomena would be much more curious; and no less interesting," said the enthusiasts, "would be the absence of the seasons."

Owing to the inclination of the axis to the plane of the orbit, we have the annual changes known as spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The Jovians could know nothing of these things, and the Terrestrians would know them no more. The moment the new axis became perpendicular to the ecliptic there would be neither frigid zones nor torrid zones, but the whole Earth would rejoice in a temperate climate.

Why was this?

What is the Torrid zone? It is that part of the Earth comprised between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. Every place within this zone has the Sun in the zenith twice a year.

What are the Temperate zones? The part comprised between the Tropics and the Polar circles; between 23° 28′ and 66° 32′ of latitude, and in which the Sun never rises to the zenith, but is above the horizon on every day in the year.

What are the Frigid zones? That part of the circum-polar regions in which the Sun does not rise above the horizon on every day in the year; while at the Pole itself he does not rise for six months at a time.

The height of the Sun above the horizon is the cause of the excessive heat of the Torrid zone, the moderate heat of the Temperate zone and the excessive cold within the Polar circles.

When the axis became perpendicular these things would be different. The Sun would remain on the plane of the Equator. All the year around he would pursue his imperturbable twelve-hour course, and rise to a distance from the zenith according to the latitude of the place. In countries of twenty degrees of latitude he would rise seventy degrees above the horizon; in countries of forty-nine degrees of latitude he would rise forty-one; in places of eighty-four degrees he would rise six, and of ninety degrees (the Pole), he would just peep half his diameter above the horizon. The days would be perfectly regular, and the Sun would rise at the same time, and also at the same point on the horizon, throughout the year.

IN the second and final installment we find our favorite author continuing this classic tale in a lighter vein. Is it possible for the earth's axis to be changed by any human agency? Evidently our hero, Mr. J. T. Maston, one of the world's greatest mathematicians, ought to know, because was it not he who successfully made the careful calculations of the projectile that took a number of travelers on a trip from the earth to the moon, and around it?

Indeed, J. T. Maston was not wrong. He knew his mathematics. But then, on the other hand, there are many other things in the universe outside of mathematics, and Jules Verne, in his inimitable manner, shows us all of these in his concluding chapters.

Excellent science, excellent humor, and an excellent author make a combination hard to beat.

"Look at the advantages!" said the friends of Barbicane. "Every man, according to his temperament, can choose his own climate, which will be invariable!"

Those modern Titans, the North Pole Practical Association, were going to effect a complete change in the state of things which had existed ever since the spheroid had been launched on its orbit to become the Earth as we know it.

The astronomer might lose a few of the familiar constellations; the poet might lose the long winter nights and the long summer days that figure so frequently in modern verse; but what of that when we think of the advantages that would be enjoyed by the majority of the human race?

As the newspapers in the Barbicane interest pointed out, the products of the Earth being reduced to regularity, the farmer could always plant and sow in the most favorable temperature.

"Be it so!" said the opposition. "But are we to have no rains, or hail, or storms, or waterspouts, or

other odds and ends that make matters pleasant for the depressed agriculturist?"

Comments

"YOU may have them, of course," said the Barbicanians, "but they will probably be rarer, owing to the regularity of the climate having its effect on the troubles of the atmosphere! Yes, humanity will profit greatly by the new state of things. It will be quite a transformation of the terrestrial globe. Barbicane & Co. will have conferred much good on the present and future generations by destroying the inequality of the days and nights and the irritating diversity of the seasons!"

And the *New York Sun* of the 27th of December concluded one of its most eloquent articles:—

"Honor to Impey Barbicane and his colleagues! Not only will they have made the Earth more hygienically habitable, but they will have made it more productive; for then we can sow as soon as we have harvested; for no time will be wasted over the winter. Not only will our coal supplies be increased by the new fields, which will insure a supply for many long years, but the climatal conditions will be altered to our great advantage! Honor, then, to Barbicane & Co., who will take the first rank among the benefactors of mankind!"

CHAPTER IX

Vitriolic Alcide

SUCH were the advantages promised by Barbicane's changing the axis of rotation—a change, however, which would only slightly affect the movement of our spheroid around the Sun. The Earth would continue to describe its orbit through space, and the conditions of the solar year would remain the same.

When the consequences of the change of axis were brought to the knowledge of the world, they caused extraordinary excitement. At first this problem of the higher mechanics received an enthusiastic welcome. The idea of having seasons of constant equality, and, according to the latitude, "to suit consumers," was very attractive. The crowd reveled in the thought that they could enjoy the perpetual spring which the bard of Telemachus accorded to the Island of Calypso, and that they could have the spring either fresh or mild. Where the new axis was to be seemed to be the secret of Barbicane, Nicholl, and J. T. Maston, which they were in no hurry to present to the public. Would they reveal it in advance, or would it be known after the experiment? It would be as well to say so, perhaps, as opinion began to show signs of anxiety in the matter.

One observation ocurred naturally to the mind, and was at once commented on in the newspapers. By what mechanical means was the change to be produced, which evidently required the employment of an enormous force?

The *Forum*, an important New York review, very justly remarked: "If the Earth did not turn on its axis, it is probable that a relatively feeble shock would suffice to give a movement of rotation around an axis arbitrarily chosen; but the Earth is like an enormous gyroscope moving at high velocity, and it is a natural law that such an apparatus has a tendency to turn around the same axis, as Foucault demonstrated in his well-known experiments. It will therefore be very difficult, if not impossible, to shift it."

But after asking what would be the effort required by the engineers of the North Polar Practical Association, it was at least as interesting to know if the effort was to be suddenly or insensibly applied. And if it was to be a sudden effort, would not the proceedings of Messrs. Barbicane & Co. produce some rather alarming catastrophies on the face of the Earth?

A New Character Appears

HERE was something to occupy the brains of the wise and foolish. A shock is a shock, and it is never agreeable to receive the blow or the counter-blow. There was a likelihood that the promoters of the enterprise had been so busy with the advantages the world was to possess that they had overlooked the destruction the operation would entail. And with considerable cleverness the Major and his allies made the most of this, and began to agitate public opinion against the president of the Gun Club.

Although France had taken no part in the syndicating, and officially treated the matter with disdain, yet there was in that country an individual who conceived the idea of setting out for Baltimore, to follow, for his own private satisfaction, the different phases of the enterprise.

He was a mining engineer of about five and thirty year of age. He had been the first on the list when admitted to the Polytechnic School, and he had been the first on the list when he left it, so that he must have been a mathematician of the first order, and probably superior to J. T. Maston, who, though he was a long way above the average, was only a calculator after all—that is to say, what Leverrier was compared to Newton or Laplace.

This engineer was a man of brains, and—though he was none the worse for that—somewhat of a humorist, and an original. In conversation with his intimates, even when he talked science, his language was more that of the slang of the streets than of the academical formulæ he employed when he wrote. He was a wonderful worker, being accustomed to sit for ten hours at a stretch before his table, writing pages on pages of algebra with as much ease as he would have written a letter.

This singular man was called Pierdeux (Alcide), and in his way of condensing it—as is the custom of his comrades—he generally signed himself APierd, or even AP 1, without even dotting the i. He was so perfervid in his discussions that he had been named Vitriolic Alcide. Not only was he big, but he was tall. His friends affirmed that his height was exactly the five millionth part of a quarter of the meridian, and they were not far out. Although his head was rather too small for his powerful bust and shoulders, yet he held it well, and piercing were the eyes that looked through his *pince-nez*. He was chiefly distiguished by one of those physiognomies in which gaiety and gravity intermingle, and his hair had been prematurely thinned by the abuse of algebraic signs under the light of the gas-lamps in the study.

He was one of the best fellows whose memory lingers at the school. Although his character was independent enough, he was always loyal to the re-

quirements of Code X, which is law among the Polytechnicians in all that concerns comradeship and respect for the uniform. He was equally appreciated under the trees of the court of "Acas," so named because there are no acacias, as in the "casers," the dormitories, in which the arrangements of his box, and the order that reigned in his "coffin," denoted an absolutely methodical mind.

That the head of Alcide Pierdeux was a little too small for his body we admit, but that it was filled to the meninges will be believed. Above all things, he was a mathematician as all his comrades are, or have been, but he only used his mathematics in application to experimental science, whose chief attraction to him was that it had much to do with industry. Herein he recognized the inferior side of his nature. No one is perfect. His strong point was the study of those sciences which, notwithstanding their immense progress, have, and always will have, secrets for their followers.

Alcide was still a bachelor. He was still "equal to one," as he phrased it, although he had no objection to become "the half of two." His friends had had ideas of marrying him to a very charming girl at Martigues. But, unfortunately, she had a father, who responded to the first overtures in the following "martigalade": "No, your Alcide is too clever! He talks to my poor girl in a way that is unintelligible to her!"

And hence Alcide resolved to take a year's holiday, and thought he could not employ his time better than in following the North Polar Practical Association in its peculiar undertaking.

As soon as he arrived at Baltimore he began to think over the matter seriously. That the Earth would become Jovian by the change of its axis mattered very little to him. But by what means it was to be brought about excited his curiosity, and not without reason.

A Frenchman in Baltimore

IN his picturesque language he said to himself, Evidently Barbicane is going to give our ball a terrible knock; but what sort of a knock? Everything depends on that! I suppose he is going to play for 'side,' as if with a cue at a billiard-ball; but if he hits us 'square' he may jolt us out of our orbit, and then the years will dance to a pretty tune. They are going to shift the old axis for a new one, probably above it, but I do not see where they are to get their taking-off place from, or how they are to manage the knock. If there was no rotation, a mere flip would suffice, but they can't put down that diurnal spin. That is the *canisdentum*."

He meant "the rub," but that was his way of expressing himself.

"Whatever they do," he continued, "there will be no end of a row before it is over."

Try all he could, the engineer could not discover Barbicane's plan, which for one reason was much to be regretted, as if it had been known to him he would at once have made the calculations he needed.

But all at present was a mystery. And so it happened that on the 29th of December Alcide Pierdeux, *Ingénieur au Corps National des Mines de France*," was hurrying with lengthy strides through the crowded streets of Baltimore.

CHAPTER X

A Change in Public Opinion

A MONTH had elapsed since the meeting in rooms of the Gun Club, and a change had taken place in public opinion.

The advantages of altering the axis of rotation were being forgotten; and the disadvantages were being enlarged upon. It was impossible that a catastrophe could be avoided, for any change must necessarily be occasioned by a violent shock. What the catastrophe would be no one could say. Was this amelioration of climate desirable? Who would gain by it except the Eskimos, Laps, and Samoyeds, who had nothing to lose?

The Major and his allies were indefatigable in their prophecies of evil.

"It is evident," said Karkof, "that the projectors will do all they can to protect the United States from the consequences of the shock."

"But can they?" asked Harald. "When you shake a tree all the branches shake."

"And," said the Dutchman, "when you are hit in the stomach does not your whole body shake?"

"That is what that famous clause meant!" said Todrin. "Here are the geographical and meteorological modifications!"

"Yes," said Baldenak. "But suppose the change of axis throws the seas out of their existing basins?"

"And if the ocean level is lowered at different points," said Jansen, "some people may find themselves so high up in the world that communication with them will be impossible!"

"If they go up too high they will not be able to breathe!" said Harald.

"Would you like to see Baltimore as high as Mont Blanc?" asked Donellan.

This modification of the axis was evidently a public danger. A change of 23° 28′ would produce a considerable displacement in the seas, owing to the flattening at the Poles. The Earth was thus threatened with similar disasters to those that, it is believed, have recently occurred in Mars. There entire continents, among others Libya and Schiaparelli, have been submerged, as shown by the faint blue replacing the faint red. Lake Moeris has disappeared. North and south there have been changes, and the oceans have withdrawn from many localties they formerly occupied. If a few charitable souls have been much affected at the "floods in Mars"—almost as much as to open subscriptions for the sufferers—what would they do for the floods on the Earth?

Protests came in by every post. The United States Government was urged to interfere.

"Look as these Yankees," said one. "They want to hang the globe on another axletree! As if the old one, after all these centuries, had worn out! But is it not as sound as it was at the beginning?"

And there was Vitriolic Alcide at work trying to find out the nature and direction of the shock that J. T. Maston had arranged. Once master of the secret, he would very soon know what parts of the Earth were in danger.

The Contents of the Note-Book

IT was not likely that the United States would suffer. Barbicane & Co. were quite Yankees

enough to take care of their own country. Evidently the new Continent between the Arctic Sea and the Gulf of Mexico had nothing to fear. It was even possible that North America would gain a considerable accession of territory.

"That may be," said the nervous people who only saw the perilous side of things. "But are you sure? Supposing J. T. Maston has made a mistake? Supposing Barbicane makes a mistake when he puts Maston's theory in practice? Such a thing can happen to the cleverest artillerists! They do not always score a bull's-eye!"

These fears were sedulously worked upon by the Major and the opposition. Todrin published a number of articles in a leading Canadian newspaper. Harald rushed into print in a Swedish journal. Colonel Boris Karkof tried his hand in a Russian one. The Americans began to take sides. The *New York Tribune* and the *Boston Journal* took up their parable against Barbicane. In vain the North Polar Practical Association tried to stem the rising tide. In vain Mrs. Scorbitt paid ten dollars a line for serious articles, humorous articles, and smart, scathing paragraphs treating the dangers as chimerical. In vain the enthusiastic widow endeavored to show that if ever hypothesis was unjustifiable, it was that which assumed that J. T. Maston was capable of an error!

Neither Barbicane nor his co-directors took the trouble to say anything. They let the talk go on without making any change in their habits. They seemed to be thoroughly absorbed in the immense preparations necessitated by their undertaking. The revulsion of public opinion seemed to concern them not in the least.

But in spite of all Mrs. Scorbitt could do, it soon came about that Impey Barbicane, Captain Nicholl, and J. T. Maston began to be looked upon as dangers to society. So high grew the clamor that the Federal Government had to interfere, and call upon them to declare their intentions. What were their means of action? How did they intend to substitute one axis for another? What would be the consequences of the substitution? What parts of the globe would the substitution endanger?

The excitement raging in every State in the Union allowed of no hesitation on the part of the Washington Government. A Commission of Inquiry, composed of engineers, mathematicians, hydrographers, and geographers, to the number of fifty, presided over by the celebrated John Prestice, was appointed on the 19th of February, with full power to investigate the affair, and put a stop to it if necessary.

Impey Barbicane was requested to attend before the commission, Barbicane did not come.

The police went to look for him at his residence, 95 Cleveland Street, Baltimore. Barbicane was there no longer.

Where was he? They did not know.

When had he gone away? Five weeks ago, on the 11th of January, he had left Maryland in company with Captain Nicholl.

Where had they gone? No one could say.

Evidently the two members of the Gun Club were on their way to the mysterious region where preparations would begin under their direction.

But where could that be?

It was important to know, if the scheme of these dangerous projectors was to be nipped in the bud.

The effect of this departure of Barbicane and Nicholl was immense. The popular wrath rose like the rising of the equinoctial tide against the North Polar Practical Association.

But there was one man who ought to know what had become of Barbicane and his colleague. There was one who ought to be able to reply, and instantly, J. T. Maston!

J. T. Maston was requested to appear before the Commission. He did not go!

Had he then left Baltimore? Had he gone with his colleagues, to help in the work of which the world awaited the results with such very natural alarm?

No! J. T. Maston was still to be found at Ballistic Cottage. He was still incessantly at work, but now on other calculations, which he only left to spend an occasional evening with Mrs. Scorbitt at New Park.

A policeman was sent with an order from the president of the Commission. The policeman reached the cottage, knocked at the door, entered the hall, and had a warm reception from Fire-Fire and a cool one from J. T. Maston.

However, the secretary of the Gun Club thought it as well to go quietly, and he appeared before the Commission complaining bitterly of having been interrupted in his occupation.

The first question put to him was, "Do you know the whereabouts of Impey Barbicane and Captain Nicholl?"

"I do," said J. T. Maston, "but I am not authorized to tell you."

Second question: "Are these two men occupied in the preparations for their intended modification of the terrestrial axis?"

"That," said J. T. Maston, "is part of the secret with which I am entrusted, and I refuse to say."

"Would he submit his calculations to the Commission, that they might judge if the project of the Association could be accomplished?"

"No, certainly not!" said J. T. Maston. "It is my right as a free American citizen to keep from anybody the result of my work!"

"But if that is your right, Mr. Maston," said President Prestice solemnly, as if he spoke in the name of the entire world, "it may be your duty to speak in face of the anxiety that exists."

Heroic Silence

J. T. MASTON did not think it was his duty. He had only one duty—to keep silent; and he would keep silent.

In spite of their persistence, their supplications, their threats, the members of the Commission of Inquiry could get nothing out of the man with the iron hook. Never would they have believed that so much obstinacy lurked within a gutta-percha cranium! J. T. Maston left as he had arrived, and that he was congratulated on his valiant defense by Mrs. Scorbitt we need hardly say.

When the result of J. T. Maston's appearance was made known, public opinion took a form that was really serious for his safety. The pressure on the Government became so great that Secretary John S.

Wright had to obtain permission from the President to act *manu militari*.

On the evening of the 13th of March, J. T. Maston was in his workroom at Ballistic Cottage, absorbed in his algebra, when the bell of the telephone tinkled nervously.

"Hallo, there! Hallo, there!" murmured the instrument in a way that showed great anxiety.

"Who's there?" asked J. T. Maston.

"Mrs. Scorbitt."

"What is it?"

"Be on your guard! I have just heard that this very night—"

The sentence had not been finished when the door of Ballistic Cottage was burst open by a push from several shoulders, and up the staircase came an extraordinary tumult. There was a voice protesting; then other voices silencing it; then a bump as of a fallen body—bump, bump—it was the negro, Fire-Fire, rolling downstairs after an unavailing defense of his master's home—bump, bump; the door of the workroom flew open; policemen rushed in; the excitable Maston seized a revolver; instantly he was disarmed; a policeman laid his hand on the papers on the desk; Maston slipped free and dashed at a note-book; the police were after him; before they could reach him he had torn out the last leaf, clipped it to his mouth, and gulped it down as if it had been a pill!

"Now!" said he in the tone of a Leonidas at Thermopylæ, "*Now* you can do your duty."

An hour afterward he was in the jail at Baltimore.

And that was probably the best thing that could have happened to him, for the populace were in such a state of excitement that the police might have found themselves powerless to protect him.

CHAPTER XI

The Contents of the Notebook

THE book seized by the Baltimore police contained thirty pages, sprinkled with formulæ, multiplications, equations, and finally the general results of J. T. Maston's calculation. It was a work of the higher mechanics, appreciable only by mathematicians. One of the equations was the—

$$V^2 - V_0^2 = 2gr\left(\frac{1}{r} - \frac{1}{r_0}\right)$$

of which we heard in the Moon Voyage.

The "general reader" could make neither head nor tail of Maston's performances; but they could understand the results as told to the newspapers a few days later.

There was nothing wrong with J. T. Maston's working, the Commission reported. The calculations had been made with such precision that the Commission had no doubt as to their accuracy and consequences. If the operation was effected, the terrestrial axis would be undoubtedly changed, and then the catastrophes foreseen would be accomplished in all their plentitude.

"The object," said the official communication to the newspapers, "of the directorate of the North Polar Practical Association is the substitution of a new axis of rotation for the old one; and it is proposed to attain this object by means of the recoil of an apparatus fixed in some agreed point of the Earth's circumference. If the core of this apparatus is firmly fixed in the ground, there can be no doubt but that it would communicate its recoil to the mass of our planet.

"The apparatus adopted by the Association is a monster cannon, which would have no effect if discharged vertically. To produce the maximum effect it must be aimed horizontally toward the north or south, and it is this latter direction which has been decided on by the Association. In this way the recoil will produce a shock toward the north of the nature of that given to a billiard-ball when struck on the side."

Exactly as Alcide had foreseen!

"As soon as the explosion takes place, the center of the Earth will be displaced in a direction parallel to that of the impetus, and a change will ensue in the plane of the orbit, and consequently in the length of the year; but this will be so slight as to be of no appreciable amount. At the same time the Earth would take a movement of rotation around an axis, supposing that no rotation existed previous to the shock. But as the rotation in the line of the Poles already exists, it will combine with the accessory rotation produced by the recoil, and result in a new axis. If the gun is fired at the moment when the Equator and the Ecliptic are in intersection, and if the recoil is enough to displace the Pole 23° 28′, then the new axis will become perpendicular to the plane of the orbit.

"The consequences of this perpendicularity were clearly stated by Impey Barbicane at the meeting on the 22nd of December.

"Given the mass of the Earth and the amount of movement it possesses, can a gun be produced having a recoil sufficient to produce such a displacement of the Pole as 23° 28′?

"Undoubtedly; if a gun, or series of guns, be constructed in accordance with the laws of mechanics, or if the inventors possess an explosive of the necessary power. Such an explosive they unfortunately possess. It was discovered by Captain Nicholl. Its name is meli-melonite, but all that is known of it is that it is a mixture of organic substances with nitric acid. A certain number of monatomic radicals are substituted for the same number of atoms of hydrogen, and a powder is obtained, which, like gun-cotton, is formed by combination, not by mechanical mixture of the principal comburents and combustibles.

A Truly Epic Reply

"WHATEVER this explosive may be, the force it possesses is sufficient to carry a projectile weighing 180,000 tons beyond the terrestrial attraction, and it is hoped by the Association that the recoil will have the effect of displacing the Pole, and forming a new axis perpendicular to the plane of the ecliptic. From which would result the catastrophes which have alarmed the inhabitants of the Earth.

"There is a chance that humanity may yet escape the consequences of an operation which would bring about such regrettable geographical and meteorological changes in the surface of the globe. Is it possible to construct a cannon of the dimensions

required? We are of opinion that it is very doubtful if it can be done.

"It is well known that the two chief directors of the North Polar Practical Association have left Baltimore and America, probably for the purpose of attempting the manufacture of this cannon in some distant part of the world.

"Where they have gone to is unknown, and consequently it is impossible to secure the malefactors who would upset the world under pretense of opening up new coal-fields.

"Evidently the place was indicated on the last page of the note-book captured by the police from J. T. Maston. But this last page had disappeared, having been swallowed by the said J. T. Maston, now in prison at Baltimore.

"Such is the position. If Impey Barbicane can make his cannon and his projectile, he will change the earth's axis, and within the next six months the earth will be subjected to his reckless assault.

"A date has been chosen for the discharge of the projectile, the date on which the shock would have its maximum of effect on the terrestrial spheroid.

"This date is the 22nd of September, twelve hours after the passage of the Sun across the meridian of the place *x*.

"This place it is impossible from the calculations to discover.

"There is nothing in J. T. Maston's note-book to show the position of the new axis.

"It is therefore impossible to state what territories or seas will be affected by the attempt.

"The difference of level will be considerable. After the shock the surface of the sea will take the form of an ellipsoid of revolution, and the level will change nearly all over the globe.

"In fact the intersection of the level of the old sea with the level of the new sea, of two equal surfaces of revolution with the axes intersecting, will be of two curved planes, and the maxima of elevation or abasement will exceed 25,000 feet.

"It is worthy of remark that the ancient Pole will be immersed under more than 9000 feet of water, so that the district acquired by the North Polar Practical Association will be flooded unless there exists at the Pole a plateau of more than that number of feet of elevation.

"Where the maximum of alteration of land will take place is unknown. There is in the equation an unknown quantity, which no known formula can evaluate. This unknown is the position of *x*, where the shock is to be applied. This *x* is the secret of the promoters of this deplorable affair.

"In conclusion, it is desirable to point out that all the inhabitants of the Earth are interested in unraveling the secret, for all are menaced by the proceedings of the Association.

"Notice is therefore given to the inhabitants of all parts of the world to keep a strict watch over all operations regarding the founding of cannons, or the fabrication of powders or projectiles taking place on their territories, and to report the appearance of any stranger connected therewith to the Commission of Inquiry at Baltimore, U. S. A.

"It is urgently necessary that the information should reach the Commission before the 22nd of September next, the date on which the established order of the terrestrial system is so seriously menaced."

CHAPTER XII

Heroic Silence

IT was a cannon that hurled the projectile up to the Moon; it was to be a cannon that was to change the terrestrial axis? The cannon! Always the cannon! Barbicane and Co. evidently suffered from chronic attacks of aggravated "cannonism"! Was a cannon the *ultima ratio* of the world? Was it to be the brutal sovereign of the universe? The canon rules theology, was the cannon to give the law to commerce and cosmology?

A cannon was the engine Barbicane & Co. were to bring into action. They had not devoted their lives to ballistics for nothing. After the Columbiad of Tampa Town there was to come the monster cannon of—of—the place of *x!* And already there were people who could hear the sonorous command:

"No. 1! Aim at the Moon! Fire!"

"No. 2! Change the Earth's axis! Fire!"

And then for the "general upset" predicted by Vitrolic Alcide!

The publication of the report of the Commission produced an effect of which it is impossible even to give an idea. There was nothing in it of a soothing tendency, it must be admitted. By J. T. Maston's calculations, the problem had evidently been solved. The operation to be attempted by Barbicane & Co. would, it was only too clear, introduce a most regrettable modification in the diurnal movement. A new axis would be substituted for the old. And we know what would be the consequences of that substitution.

The enterprise of Barbicane & Co. was thus judged, cursed, and demitted to general reprobation. Barbicane & Co. were dangers to society. If they retained a few partisans in the United States, they were few indeed.

Interesting for the Inhabitants of the Terrestrial Spheroid

FROM the point of view of their own personal safety, Impey Barbicane and Captain Nicholl had certainly done wisely to clear out. They would assuredly have come to grief if they had not done so. It was not with impunity that they could menace fourteen hundred millions of people, upset their habits and customs, and disturb their very existence by provoking a general catastrophe.

But how had these two men managed to disappear without leaving a trace? How could they have gotten away unperceived with the men and material necessary for their project? Hundreds of wagons, if they went by railway, and hundreds of ships, if they went by sea, would be required for the transport of the metal, the fuel, and the melimelonite. It was quite incomprehensible how the departure could have taken place incognito. But it had taken place nevertheless.

Inquiries were made, but nothing was discovered as to any order being sent to any of the metallurgical or chemical works of the world. It was inexplicable! But the explanation would come—some day!

Barbicane and Nicholl having mysteriously dis-

appeared, were beyond immediate danger. But J. T. Maston! He was under lock and key; but were not public reprisals to be feared? Bah! He did not trouble himself about that in the least! Admirably obstinate was the calculator! He was of iron—like his fore-arm! At nothing did he quail!

From the depths of his cell in the jail of Baltimore the secretary of the Gun Club became more and more absorbed in the distant contemplation of the colleagues he had not accompanied. In his mind's eye he could see Barbicane and Nicholl preparing their gigantic enterprise in that unknown region where no one could interefere with them. He saw them making the cannon, mixing the meli-melonite, casting the projectile which the Sun would soon count among its minor asteroids! That new star which was to bear the name of Scorbitta, as a delicate compliment to the millionaire of New Park! J. T. Maston began to count the days that would elapse before the word to fire was given.

It was the month of April. In two months and a half the Sun would halt at the solstice on the Tropic of Cancer and retrograde toward the Tropic of Capricorn. Three months later he would cross the Equator at the autumnal equinox. And with that would finish the seasons that for millions of ages had alternated with such regularity in every terrestrial year. For the last time the spheroid would submit to the inequality of its days and nights. For the future the number of hours between sunrise and sunset would be equal all over the globe.

In truth it was a magnificent work! J. T. Maston forgot all about the Polar coal-field in contemplating the cosmographical consequences of his labors. The principal object of the Association had been forgotten in the transformations the face of the earth would undergo—notwithstanding that the earth did not care about these magnificent transformations.

J. T. Maston, alone and defenseless in his cell, resisted every pressure brought to bear on him. The members of the Commission of Inquiry visited him daily, and obtained nothing. It occurred at last to John Prestice to make use of an influence that might succeed better than his—that of Mrs. Scorbitt. No one was ignorant of the lengths to which the widow would go when the celebrated calculator was in peril.

There was a meeting of the Commission, and Mrs. Scorbitt was authorized to visit the prisoner as often as she thought fit. Was not she threatened with the danger from the recoil of the monster cannon as much as any other of the world's inhabitants? Would her New Park mansion escape the final catastrophe any more than the wigwam of the poor Indian or the humble hut of the backwoodsman? Was not her life as much in danger as that of the obscurest Samoyed or South Sea Islander? The president of the Commission elaborately explained this to her, and suggested that she should bring her influence to bear for the general good.

If she could only get J. T. Maston to state where Barbicane and Nicholl had gone, there would still be time to pursue them and save humanity from the impending fate.

A Mathematician in Jail

AND so Mrs. Scorbitt had access to the jail. What she desired above all was to see J. T. Maston, who had been torn by the police from the comforts of this cottage. Let it not be supposed that the heroic Evangelina was a slave to human weakness. And if, on the 9th of April, some indiscreet ear had been applied to the keyhole the first time that the widow appeared in the cell, this is what would have met it:

"At last, dear Maston, I see you again!"

"You, Mrs. Scorbitt!"

"Yes, my friend, after four weeks, four long weeks of separation—"

"Exactly twenty-eight days, five hours, forty-five minutes," said Maston, looking at his watch.

"At last we meet!"

"But why, Mrs. Scorbitt? Why have they allowed you to come here?"

"To use whatever influence a boundless admiration may have on him who is its object!"

"What!" exclaimed J. T. Maston, "you have consented to talk thus to me! You have imagined that I would betray my colleagues?"

"Do you think so meanly of me? I to ask you to sacrifice your safety to your honor? I to urge you to an act which would be the disgrace of a life consecrated to the highest speculations of the higher mechanics?"

"Bravo, Mrs. Scorbitt! I recognize the worthy shareholder of our Association! Never did I doubt your courage!"

"Thank you, dear Maston."

"As for me, to divulge our work; to reveal at what spot on the surface of the earth our effort is to be made; to sell the secret I fortunately kept hidden within me; to permit these barbarians to launch off in pursuit of our friends, to interrupt the labors they are engaged in for our profit and our glory! I would rather die first!"

"Maston, you are sublime!" said Evangelina.

In truth, these two beings, so closely united in enthusiasm—and equally mad—were born to understand each other.

"No!" continued Maston. "Never shall they know the name of the country which my calculations have designated, and which will become immortal. They may kill me if they will, but they shall never possess my secret."

"And they may kill me with you," said Mrs. Scorbitt; "for I also will be dumb."

"Fortunately, they do not know that you possess the secret."

"Do you think I am capable of revealing it because I am only a woman? to betray our colleagues and you? No, my friend; no! The philistines may raise the world against you to tear you from your cell, but I will be with you, and we shall have at least the consolation of dying together!"

And that was the way the conversation ended every time the widow visited the prisoner. And every time the Commissioners inquired as to the result the answer was the same.

"Nothing yet; but in time I hope to obtain what you want!"

Oh, the astuteness of woman!

"In time!" she said. But time marched on; week-

went by like days, days like hours, hours like minutes.

It was now May. Mrs. Scorbitt had obtained nothing; and if she failed, who could hope to succeed? Was the world to resign itself to this terrible blow without a chance of hindering it?

The Chorus of Terror

WELL, no! in such things resignation is unacceptable. Our friends the delegates were unceasing in fomenting the excitement. Jansen overwhelmed the Commissioners daily. Karkoff picked a quarrel with the secretary. Donellan, to make things worse, directed attention to another victim in the shape of the codfish merchant, Forster, who had sunk into insignificance after the auction sale, to bid at which he had been engaged. And in order to bring the phlegmatic fishmonger prominently to the front, the Canadian attempted to knock him down. To complicate matters further, "the friendly Powers" began "to bring pressure to bear" on the Washington Government, which had quite enough to do to withstand the "pressure" of its own people. In reply the Washington Government issued a circular authorizing the arrest of the two "malefactors" by any power whatsoever. But none the less did it remain impossible to discover where the malefactors had gone.

Then the Powers hinted that if J. T. Maston were properly dealt with, J. T. Maston would reveal the secret. But the Government might as well have tried to extract a word from Harpocrates, the god of silence, or from the chief deaf-mute of the New York Institute.

And then the exasperation increased with the general anxiety, and a few practical minds drew attention to the fact that the torture system of the Middle Ages was not without some advantages. So it was proposed to introduce, for the benefit of J. T. Maston, a few experiments with the "boot," the "scavenger's daughter," "molten lead," "boiling oil," the "wooden horse," the "bastinado," etc., etc. But such things were impossible in the century which invented the magazine rifle, roburite, bellite, panclastite, and other "ites," not to mention the far superior meli-melonite.

J. T. Maston had, then, no fear of being put to the torture. All that could be done with him was to hope that he would speak, or that chance would speak for him.

CHAPTER XIII

A Truly Epic Reply

TIME advanced, and so probably did the works of Barbicane & Co., but where, was the mystery.

But if their works were to require a foundry capable of casting a gun a million times larger than a four-hundred pounder, and a projectile weighing one hundred and eighty thousand tons, they would want thousands of workmen; and where, oh! where could they be?

In what part of the old or new world had Barbicane & Co. installed themselves so secretly as to be invisible to the nations around? Had they gone to some desert island of the Pacific? But there are no desert islands now. That they had gone to the Arctic or Antarctic regions was extremely unlikely, for those were the very regions they intended to displace.

There was no need to look for them all over the world, for J. T. Maston's note-book had revealed the fact that the shot must be fired from near the equator. Along the equinoctial line, they might be in Brazil or Peru, or Sumatra, or Borneo, or Celebes, or New Guinea, but surely they would have been discovered by the people in the neighborhood? All through Africa, too, they would be almost certain of discovery. There remained the Maldive Islands, the Admiralty, Gilbert, and Christmas Islands, the Galapagos and San Pedro Islands; but all these had been searched, and no trace of Barbicane & Co. had been found.

And what did Alcide Pierdeux think of all this? More "sulphuric" than ever, he knew no rest in considering the different consequences of the problem. That Captain Nicholl had invented an explosive of such power that its expansion was three or four thousand times greater than the most violent explosives used in modern war, and five thousand six hundred times stronger than "good old gun-powder," was, he remarked, "*étonnant*, not to say *détonnant!*" but it was not impossible. No one knows what the future has in store for us in that kind of progress. In the shifting of the Earth's axis by means of the recoil of a gun there was nothing to surprise him.

"It is evident," he said to himself," that every day the Earth receives the counter-shock from every shock produced on its surface! It is certain that when hundreds of thousands of men amuse themselves by sending thousands of projectiles weighing pounds, or millions weighing ounces, even when I walk or jump, or when I stretch out my arm, or when a blood corpuscle circulates in my veins, it must in some way influence the mass of our spheroid. But in the name of an integral will Barbicane's jolt be sufficient to upset the Earth? If the equations of that brute Maston really demonstrate that, we must make up our minds to it!"

A Great Mathematician

IN truth, Alcide could not but admire the ingenious calculations of the secretary of the Gun Club, communicated by the Commission of Inquiry to the mathematicians who could understand them. And Alcide, who read algebra as if it were a newspaper, found the study of them extremely interesting.

But if the upset did come, what a dreadful state of affairs there would be in the world! What cities thrown down, what mountains shaken, what people destroyed by millions, what waters hurled from their beds, what fearful terrors! It would be such an earthquake as had never quaked before!

"If Nicholl's powder," he said, "was not quite so strong, the projectile might return to give the Earth another shock either before or behind the firing-point, after making the turn of the globe, and then everything might soon be knocked back into place, after causing immense destruction, nevertheless! But they are going to throw it overboard! Thanks to their meli-melonite their shell will describe the half of a hyperbola and never come

back to beg pardon for having given that kick to the terrestrial ball!"

And Alcide threw his arms about like the semaphore at Portsmouth Dockyard, at the risk of breaking everything within a radius of six feet of him.

"If the firing-point were known I could soon find the great circles in which the alteration will be zero, and the places where it will reach the maximum, so as to give folks notice to clear out and save themselves from being smashed by their houses tumbling about their ears! But how am I to know that firing-point?"

And he ran his fingers through the very little hair that had been left him.

"The results of the shock may be much more complicated than they imagine! Why should not the volcanoes take the opportunity to favor us with a few disorderly eruptions, and, like a first voyager, displace some of the matter in their insides? Why should not the uplifted ocean take a header into some of the craters? There's a chance for you! That would give an explosion that might send the whole tellurian box of tricks sky high, or rather sky higher! What do you say to that, you confounded Maston? You obstinate mute! What do you mean by juggling with our poor Earth as if it were a ball on a billiard table?"

These alarming hypotheses of Vitriolic Alcide were taken up and discussed by the newspapers all over the world. The pyrotechnic display organized by Barbicane & Co. would end in waterspouts, tidal waves, deluges, would it? But such catastrophes would only be partial! Thousands of people would disappear, and the rest would hardly notice anything worth mentioning! As the fatal day approached, fear came over the bravest. It might have been the dreadful year 1000 from the way in which the people generally conducted themselves.

What happened in that year 1000 it may be interesting to recall. Owing to a passage in the Apocalypse, the people of Europe were persuaded that the Day of Judgement was nigh. They waited for the signs of wrath; the son of Perdition, Antichrist, was to be revealed.

"In the last year of the tenth century," relates H. Martin, "everything was interrupted—pleasures, business, interest, even the work in the fields. 'Why,' said the people, 'should we provide for a future that will never come? Let us think of eternity, which will begin tomorrow.' They provided only for their immediate needs; they handed over their lands and castles to the monasteries to obtain their protection in the kingdom in the skies which was about to come to them. Many of the deeds of gift to the churches begin with the words, 'The end of the world approaching, and its ruin being imminent.' When the end of the fatal term arrived the people kept within the basilicas, the chapels, the edifices consecrated to God, and waited in agony for the seven trumpets of the seven angels of judgment to sound in the sky."

As we know, New Year's Day, 1000, was reached without any disturbance in the laws of Nature. But this time the expectation of the catastrophe was not based on a doubtful interpretation of a text. It was a change to be applied to the earth's equilibrium, based on indisputable calculations which the progress of the ballistic and mechanical sciences rendered quite possible. This time it was not the sea that would give back the dead, but the sea that would engulf millions of the living.

Under these circumstances, the position of J. T. Maston became daily more critical. Mrs. Scorbitt trembled lest he should become the victim of the general mania. Sometimes she thought of advising him to speak the word which he so obstinately kept to himself. But she dared not, and she did well. It would have been to expose herself to a categorical refusal.

The city of Baltimore was a prey to terror, and it became difficult to restrain the populace, who were being excited even unto madness by the newspapers, by the telegrams which they published from the four angles of the earth, to use the apocalyptic language of St. John the Evangelist in the days of Domitian. Assuredly, if J. T. Maston had lived under that persecuting emperor, his business would soon have been settled. He would have been thrown to the beasts. But he would have contented himself with replying:

"I am there already!"

But no matter what happened, he refused to reveal the position of place *x*, knowing well that if he divulged it Barbicane and Nicholl would be prevented from continuing their work.

One Man Against the World

AFTER all, there was something grand in this struggle between one man and the entire world. J. T. Maston increased in grandeur in the mind of Mrs. Scorbitt, and also in the opinion of his colleagues of the Gun Club. These gallant fellows were as obstinate as retired artillery men and never swerved from their support of Barbicane & Co. The secretary of the Gun Club reached such a height of celebrity that a number of persons even wrote to him, as they do to famous criminals, to obtain a few lines from the hand of the man who was going to upset the globe.

This was all very fine, but it was more and more dangerous. The populace thronged day and night around the jail of Baltimore. There was great shouting and much tumult. The mob would have lynched J. T. Maston there and then if they could; and the police saw the time was coming when they could no longer protect him.

Desirous of satisfying the American mob, as well as the mob of other countries, the Washington Government decided to bring J. T. Maston to trial.

With a jury selected from the terrified masses, "the affair would not hang about long," to quote the words of Alcide, who felt a kind of sympathy for the calculator's tenacity.

On the 5th of September, the President of the Commission visited the prisoner in his cell.

Mrs. Scorbitt, at his urgent request, was allowed to accompany him. Perhaps at the last attempt the influence of this amiable lady might be successful. It would not do to neglect anything. All means were legitimate that might secure the word of the enigma. If they did not succeed, they would see!

"They will see!" said the knowing ones. "Suppose they hang J. T. Maston, and the catastrophe takes place all the same?"

At eleven o'clock, then, Maston found himself in

the presence of John Prestice and Evangelina Scorbitt.

"For the last time," said Prestice, "will you answer me?"

"What about?" said Maston.

"Where has your colleague, Barbicane, gone to?"

"I have already told you a hundred times."

"Repeat it for the hundred and first."

"He has gone where he will fire the cannon."

"And where will he fire the cannon?"

"Where Barbicane is at this present moment."

"Take care, Maston!"

"Of what?"

"Of the consequences of your refusal to reply. The result will be—"

"That you will not discover what you have no right to know."

"What we have the right to know."

"That is not my opinion."

"We are going to put you on your trial."

"You can put me on my trial."

"And the jury will find you guilty."

"Let them find me guilty."

"And the sentence will immediately be given and immediately executed."

"Very well."

"Dear Maston!" said Evangelina, whose heart trembled at the prospect.

"Oh! Mrs. Scorbitt," said J. T. Maston.

She bowed her head, and was silent.

"Would you like to know what the sentence will be—"

"Yes, if you like."

"You will be hanged, as you deserve."

"Really."

"And you will be hanged, sir, as sure as two and two make four."

The Difference Between a Theorem and a Definition

"THEN, sir, I shall have a chance," said the phlegmatic Maston. "If you were only the least bit of a mathematician you would not say as sure as two and two make four. What is it that proves that all mathematicians up to now have not been mad in asserting that the sum of two numbers is equal to that of their parts, that two and two make exactly four?"

"Sir!" exclaimed the president, completely puzzled.

"Ah!" continued Maston. "If you had said as sure as one and one make two, all right! That is absolutely evident, for it is no longer a theorem, it is a definition."

At this lesson in arithmetic, the president of the Commission retired, while Mrs. Scorbitt's eyes were ablaze with admiration for the extraordinary abilities of her beloved calculator.

CHAPTER XIV

The Geographical Value of X

FORTUNATELY for J. T. Maston, the Federal Government unexpectedly received the following telegram:

"To John S. Wright, Washington, U. S. A.

"Zanzibar, 13th September, 5 a. m., local time. Great foundries have been established among the Wamasai to the south of Kilimanjaro. For eight months Impey Barbicane and Nicholl have been there, with hundreds of black workmen under the authority of the Sultan Bali-Bali. Information for Government purposes.—Richard W. Trust, U. S. Consul."

And that is how the great secret was discovered. And that is why the secretary of the Gun Club was not hanged.

But who can say that he did not live to regret that he was not removed from mankind in all the plenitude of his glory?

Anyhow the fact of the discovery is so important in our history that we shall only be treating it with due respect in giving it this chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XV

Interesting for the Inhabitants of the Terrestrial Spheroid

AND so the Washington Government knew Barbican & Co. had commenced business. There could be no doubt as to the authenticity of the telegram. The Consul of Zanzibar was too cautious a man for his information to be doubted, and it was confirmed by subsequent telegrams. The gigantic works of the North Polar Practical Association were in full swing in the center of the Kilimanjaro region, about three hundred miles from the East Coast of Africa, a little below the equinoctial line.

How had they come to be installed so secretly in this lost country, at the foot of the famous mountain discovered in 1848 by Krapf and Rebmann? How had Barbicane & Co. been able to build their foundries and collect their staff? By what means had they managed to enter into peaceful relations with the savage tribes of the districts, and their cruel and grasping chiefs? Nobody knew. And as there were only a few days to run before the 22nd, it was not unlikely that nobody would know.

When J. T. Maston learned from Evangelina that the mystery of Kilimanjaro had been cleared up by a telegram from Zanzibar—

"Pshaw!" he said, making a wonderful zigzag in the air with his iron hook. "They do not travel yet by telegraph or telephone; and in six days—patarapatanboom-boom—all will be ready!"

And any one who heard the secretary of the Gun Club deliver the sonorous onomatope, like a roar from a Columbiad, would have wondered at the amount of vital energy remaining in the old artilleryman.

But there was no doubt that he was right. There was no time to send messengers to the Wamasai to arrest Impey Barbicane. Even if the messengers started from Egypt, or Aden, or Massowah, or Zanzibar, however quickly they might travel, they would have to contend with the difficulties of the country, with the obstacles unavoidable on a road through a mountainous region, and probably with followers acting under the orders of a sultan as despotic as he was black.

All hope would have to be given up of stopping the operation or arresting the operator.

But, if that was impossible, nothing was easier now than to know the worst that could happen. The firing-point had been revealed, and it was a simple

matter of calculation—a complicated calculation evidently, but not beyond the capacities of algebraists in particular and mathematicians in general.

At first the Government kept the despatch secret, their object being to be able to indicate when they published it what would be the results of the displacement of the axis with regard to the alteration in the level of the waters. The inhabitants of the world would then know the fate that was in store for them, according to the segment of the spheroid on which they resided.

On the 14th of September the telegram was sent to the Longitudes Office at Washington, with instructions to work out the final consequences, ballistic and geographical. The next day but one the information was ready. It was cabled at once to all the Governments of the new and old worlds, and having been printed in thousands of newspapers, it was cried in all the great cities by all the newsboys of the globe, as—

"What is going to happen?"

Which was the question being asked in every language just then.

What Is Going to Happen?

AND this is the reply as given by the Longitudes Office.

"IMPORTANT NOTICE

The experiment to be attempted by Barbicane & Co. is as follows:

"To produce a recoil on the 22nd of September at midnight, local time, by means of a monster cannon throwing a projectile of one hundred and eighty thousand tons.

"If this discharge is effected just below the Equator, near the thirty-eighth meridian, at the base of the Kilimanjaro chain, and if it is directed toward the south, the mechanical effect on the terrestrial spheroid will be as follows:

"At once, owing to the shock being combined with the diurnal movement, a new axis will be formed, the old axis being 23° 28', and the new one being perpendicular to the plane of the ecliptic.

"In the north the extremity of the new axis will be situated between Greenland and Grinnell Land, on that part of Baffin Sea cut by the Arctic Circle. In the south it will be on the Antarctic Circle to the east of Adelaide Land.

"As an example of the new meridians, we may mention that passing through Dublin in Ireland, Paris in France, Palermo in Cicily, Obeid in Darfur, Kilimanjaro, Kerguelen Island, the new Antarctic Pole, the Society Islands in the Pacific, Vancouver Island, and Melville Peninsula.

"The new Equator will pass through the Kilimanjaro country, the Indian Ocean, Goa, a little below Calcutta, Mangala in Siam, Hong Kong, the Marshall and Walker Islands in the Pacific, Rio Janeiro, Saint Helena, and by St. Paul de Loanda across Africa to Kilimanjaro.

"The new Equator having been formed by the new axis, it is possible to calculate the results on the ocean levels.

"It is worthy of note that Barbicane & Co., or rather the directors of the North Polar Practical Association, have evidently been desirous of doing as little damage as possible. Had the discharge been effected toward the north, the consequences would have been disastrous for the most civilized portions of the globe; but by firing toward the south the consequences, so far as the submergence of the land is concerned, will only affect the less peopled and wilder countries.

"The globe will, for the purposes of this inquiry, be divided by two great circles, intersecting at right angles at Kilimanjaro and the antipodes of that mountain, thus giving four segments, two in the northern hemisphere, and two in the southern hemisphere, separated by lines in which no alteration of level will occur.

"1. The northern hemisphere:

"The first segment, to the west of Kilimanjaro, will comprise Africa from the Congo to Egypt, Europe from Turkey to Greenland, America from British Columbia to Peru and Brazil north of San Salvador—in fact the whole of the North Atlantic and the greater part of the Equatorial Atlantic.

"The second segment, to the east of Kilimanjaro, will comprise the greater part of Europe from the Black Sea to Sweden, the Russian Empire, Arabia, almost all India, Persia, Beloochistan, Afghanistan, Turkestan, the Celestial Empire, Mongolia, Japan, Corea, the Northern Pacific and Alaska—and also the Polar regions, so regrettably placed in the possession of Barbicane & Co.

"2. The southern hemisphere:

"The third segment, to the east of Kilimanjaro, will comprise Madagascar, Kerguelen Island, Mauritius, and the islands of the Indian Ocean, the Antarctic Ocean to the New Pole, the Malay Peninsula, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and all the southern Pacific up to the meridian of the Society Islands.

"The fourth segment, to the west of Kilimanjaro, will include Africa south of the Congo and the Mozambique Channel, the Cape of Good Hope, the South Atlantic, South America below Pernambuco and Lima, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, the Argentine Confederation, Tierra del Fuego, the Sandwich and South Shetland Islands, and a portion of the South Pacific.

"Such will be the four segments of the globe divided by lines of no alteration in level.

"In each of these four segments there will be a central point where the effect will attain its maximum, either of increase or decrease.

"This maximum will approach 25,000 feet at each point and at the point the consequences will be most serious.

"In two segments situated opposite each other in the northern and southern hemispheres, the sea will retire to flow into the two other segments.

"In the first segment the Atlantic Ocean will almost entirely empty itself, the point of maximum being about the Bermudas, where the bottom will become visible if the dept of the sea in that locality be less than 25,000 feet. Consequently, between America and Europe, vast territories will be revealed, which the United States, Great Britain, France, Spain and Portugal can annex *pro rata* to their Atlantic coast-lines, or otherwise, as they may think fit. But it must be remembered that as the waters are lowered, so will the air be. The coast of Europe and America will be lifted to

such an extent, that towns placed twenty or even thirty degrees from the point of maximum, will have no more air than is now available at three miles from the surface of the sea. New York, Philadelphia, Charlestown, Panama, Lisbon, Madrid, Paris, London, Edinburgh, Dublin will be thus elevated, but Cairo, Constantinople, Dantzic, Stockholm on one side, and the western coast towns of America on the other, will retain their present level. The Bermudas will be in such rarefied air as has hitherto been only experienced by aeronauts, and will become as uninhabitable as the upper peaks of the mountains of Tibet.

"Similar effects will be experienced in the opposite southern segment comprising the Indian Ocean, Australia, and the Pacific. At Adelaide and Melbourne the level of the sea will sink 25,000 feet below them, and the air will become so thin and rarefied as to be unbreathable.

"Such are the two segments from which the waters will retire. In the sea that will be left there will probably be many new islands, formed by the summits of submarine mountain-chains.

"In the other segments the waters will rise to a corresponding height.

"In the segment north-east of Kilimanjaro the maximum will be at Yakutsk in Siberia. This town will be submersed under 25,000 feet of water —less its actual altitude—and thence thinning out on all sides the flood will spread out over Asiatic Russia, India, China, Japan and Alaska. The Ural Mountains may possibly appear above the waters as islands. St. Petersburg and Moscow on one side, Calcutta, Bangkok, Saigon, Pekin, Hong Kong, and Tokyo, on the other, will disappear beneath the waves at variable depths, but at depths quite sufficient to drown such of the Russians, Hindoos, Siamese, Cochinchinese, Chinese, and Japanese who have not left the country before the catastrophe.

"In the segment south-west of Kilimanjaro the disasters will not be of such magnitude, as the segment is in a great measure covered by the Atlantic and Pacific, the level of which will rise 25,000 feet above the Falkland Islands. But nevertheless much territory will disappear, among others all South Africa from the Gulf of Guinea and Kilimanjaro to the Cape of Good Hope, all South America south of Central Brazil and Peru, including Chili, the Argentine Republic down to Tierra del Fuego. The Patagonians, however tall they may be, will not escape destruction, as they will not even have the resource of escaping to the Cordilleras, not one of whose summits will in those parts rise above sea-level.

"Such will be the results produced by the changes of the level of the waters. And such are the eventualities for which those interested must prepare, unless something happens to prevent the dastardly enterprise of Barbicane & Co."

CHAPTER XVI

The Chorus of Terror

ACCORDING to the "important notice," the dangers of the position could be avoided, or rather fled from, by hurrying off to the neutral zones.

The people in peril could be divided into two classes, the asphyxiated and the drowned.

The effect of the communication was to give rise to very different opinions, which soon developed into the most violent protestations.

On the side of the asphyxiated were the Americans of the United States, the Europeans of the United Kingdom, and France, Spain, etc. The prospect of being able to annex territories from the ocean-bed was not attractive enough to persuade them to accept the change.

On the side of the drowned were the inhabitants of South America, and the Hindoos, Russians, and Chinese. But Great Britian was not likely to allow Barbicane & Co. to deprive her of her southern colonies; and the other nations decidedly objected to being so summarily disposed of. Evidently the Gulf of Mexico would be emptied to form a huge territory of the Antilles, which the Mexicans and Americans might claim in accordance with the Monroe Doctrine. Evidently the lift of the Philippines and Celebes would bring up an immense region which the British and Spanish might share. But vain such compensation! It would never balance the loss due to the terrible inundation.

If the new seas were only to rise over the Samoyeds, Laps, Fuegians, Patagonians, Tartars even, Chinese, Japanese, or even Argentines, the world might have borne the bereavement. But the catastrophe affected too many of the great Powers for them to bear it quietly.

Although the central part would remain much as it is, Europe would be lifted in the west and lowered in the east, that is to say half asphyxiated on one side and half drowned on the other.

Such a state of affairs was unacceptable. Besides, the Mediterranean would be nearly drained dry, and that neither French, Italians, Spainards, Greeks, Turks, nor Egyptians cared for, as their position on its coast gave them indisputable rights over the sea. And what would be the use of the Suez Canal, which would escape, owing to its position on the neutral line? What was to be done with that when there was no Mediterranean at one end and very little Red Sea at the other—unless it was lengthened by several hundred miles?

Great Britain had no desire to see Gibraltar, Malta, and Cyprus transformed into mountain-tops which ironclads would try to anchor near in vain. And the British Government declined to entertain in any form the suggested compensation from the risen bed of the Atlantic.

In short, all the world was in arms against Barbicane & Co. Even the people on the neutral lines were urgent in their protests. And so it soon came about that Barbicane, Nicholl, and J. T. Maston were put under the ban of humanity.

But how the newspapers prospered! What a rush there was for copies! What editions after editions! For the first time in the history of the newspaper press all the papers of every country in the world were agreed upon one matter. And the effect of that is more easily imagined than described!

J. T. Maston might well believe that his last hour was come.

A Mob of Lynchers and an Empty Cell

IN fact, a frantic mob broke into his prison on the evening of the 17th of September with the intention of lynching him, and it is well to say, the police made no objection.

The cell was empty! With the worthy calculator's weight in gold, Mrs. Scorbitt had managed his escape. The jailer was the more ready to be bribed by a fortune as he had hopes of enjoying it for some years. In fact, Baltimore, like Washington, New York, and the other chief cities of the Atlantic seaboard, was in the list of towns to be reasonably elevated, and in which there would remain enough air for the daily consumption of their inhabitants.

J. T. Maston had gained some mysterious retreat where he was safe from the fury of popular wrath. Thus was the life of the great world-troubler saved by a woman's devotion.

And now only four days remained before Barbicane & Co. did their awful deed. The important notice had been generally understood. If there had been a few skeptics before, there were none now. The Government issued proclamations to such of their peoples as were to be sent up into the rarefied air, and to the greater number that were to be dropped into deep water.

The result was such a migration as had never been seen, not even when the Aryan families began to remove. An exodus took place comprising every branch of the Hottentots, Melanesians, Negroes, Red Men, Yellow Men, Brown Men, White Men.

Unfortunately the time was too short. It could be reckoned in hours. Given a few months, the Chinese might abandon China, the Australians Australia, the Patagonians Patagonia, the Siberians Siberia.

But time! Time! The time! How was it possible?

Migration was useless.

There was only one chane!

Suppose that Barbicane & Co. were to fail?

CHAPTER XVII

The Works at Kilimanjaro

THE country of the Wamasai is situated in the east of Central Africa, between Zanzibar and the great lakes. Our knowledge of it is due chiefly to Thomson, Johnston, Count Tekeli and Doctor Meyer. It is a mountainous district under the sovereignty of the Sultan Bali-Bali, whose people are negroes, and number from thirty to forty thousand.

Three degrees south of the Equator rises the chain of Kilimanjaro, which lifts its highest summit over 18,000 feet above the sea, and commands northward, southward, and westward, the vast and fertile plains of the Wamasai.

A few miles below the first slopes of the mountain lies the town of Kisongo, where the Sultan resides. The capital is, truth to tell, but a large village. It is occupied by a population, highly gifted and intelligent, and working hard as much by itself as by its slaves under the iron yoke of Bali-Bali, who is justly considered to be one of the most remarkable sovereigns of Central Africa.

Impey Barbicane and Captain Nicholl, accompanied by ten foremen devoted to the enterprise, had arrived at Kisongo in the first week of January. The fact of their departure had only been communicated to J. T. Maston and Mrs. Scorbitt. They had embarked at New York for the Cape of Good Hope; thence they had gone to Zanzibar; and a bark, secretly chartered, had taken them to Mombasa on the other side of the channel. An escort from the Sultan had met them at this port, and after a difficult journey of about 300 miles across this harassed region, obstructed by forests, cut up by streams, and checkered with marshes, they had reached the royal residence.

As soon as he had obtained J. T. Maston's calculations, Barbicane had put himself in communication with Bali-Bali through a Swedish explorer who intended to spend a few years in this part of Africa. The Sultan had become one of the warmest admirers of the audacious Yankee after the celebrated Moon Voyage, the fame of which had spread even to this distant country. Without disclosing his object Barbicane had obtained from the Wamasai the needful authority to open important works at the southern base of Kilimanjaro. For the very considerable sum of three hundred thousand dollars Bali-Bali had engaged to furnish him with the labor he required to do what he liked with Kilimanjaro. He could take it down if he liked, or carry it away if he could; and he became as much the owner of the mountain as he was of the North Pole.

The Works in Africa

BARBICANE and his colleague were cordially welcomed at Kisongo. Bali-Bali felt an admiration bordering on adoration for the two illustrious voyagers who had launched out in space to attain the circumlunar regions, and sympathized enthusiastically with the projectors of the mysterious works they wished to establish in his kingdom. He undertook that the enterprise should be kept secret, both by himself and his subjects, for all of whom he could answer, as not one of the negroes engaged had the right to leave the works for a day under penalty of the most dreadful punishments.

On this account the operation was enveloped in a mystery that the cleverest detectives of America and Europe failed to penetrate, and if it was discovered at last it was because the Sultan had relaxed his severity after the completion of the works, and because there are traitors or chatterers even among negroes. It was in this way that Richard W. Trust, the consul at Zanzibar, got wind of what was happening at Kilimanjaro. But at that date, the 13th of September, it was too late to stop Barbicane in the accomplishment of his plans.

The reason that Barbicane & Co. had chosen the country of the Wamasai as the scene of their operations was that, in the first place, it was little known and rarely visited by travelers, and, secondly, that the mass of Kilimanjaro offered all the qualities of solidity and position necessary for their work. Besides, the country was rich in all the materials they required, and these were found under conditions that made them easily workable.

A few months before leaving the United States, Barbicane had learned from the Swedish explorer

that iron and coal were abundant in the Kilimanjaro chain. There were no mines to be opened, and no shafts to be driven thousands of feet into the crust of the earth. The minerals were on the surface, and had only to be picked up from the ground. And in addition to these, there were large deposits of nitrate of soda and iron pyrites, such as were required for the manufacture of the meli-melonite.

Barbicane and Nicholl had brought no staff of workmen with them except the ten foremen, on whom they could depend. These could take command of the ten thousand negroes placed at their disposal by Bali-Bali, to whom was entrusted the task of making the monster cannon and its no less monster projectile.

A fortnight after the arrival of Barbicane and his colleague among the Wamasai, three large workshops had been erected in the south of the mountain; one as the foundry for the gun, one as the foundry for the shot, and one as the factory for the meli-melonite.

And how did Barbicane & Co. intend to cast a cannon of such colossal dimensions? The only chance for the inhabitants of the world was, as we have seen, in the difficulty of dealing with such a huge undertaking.

To cast a cannon a million times larger than a four hundred pounder would have been beyond the power of man. To make a four hundred pounder is difficult enough, but a four hundred million pounder! Barbicane & Co. did not attempt to do so. It was not a cannon nor even a mortar, that they had in their minds. They simply intended to drive a gallery into the mountain.

Evidently this enormous mine would have the same effect as a gigantic Columbiad, the manufacture of which would have been as costly as it was difficult, owing to the thickness it would have to be to avoid the risk of bursting. Barbicane & Co. had always intended to act in this way, and if J. T. Maston's note-book spoke of a cannon, it was the four hundred pounder he had taken as the basis of his calculations.

Consequently, a spot was chosen a hundred feet up the southern side of the chain, from the base of which the plains extended for miles and miles, so that nothing would be in the way of the projectile when it was hurled from the long tube in the mass of Kilimanjaro.

With great precision and much labor Barbicane carried on the driving of his tunnel. Easy to him was the construction of boring machines worked with air compressed by the power of the large waterfalls in the district. The holes bored by the machines were charged with meli-melonite, and the blasting of the rock was easy, it being a kind of syenite composed of orthoclasic felspar and amphibolic hornblende. It was a favorable circumstance that a rock so constituted would strongly resist the frightful pressure developed by the expansion of the gas; but the height and thickness of the mountain afforded ample security against any exterior splitting or cracking.

The Great Gun Is Finished

THE thousands of workmen under the guidance of the ten foremen, superintended by Barbicane, progressed with such zeal and intelligence that in less than six months the tunnel was finished. It measured nearly ninety feet in diameter and two thousand feet long. As it was important that the projectile should glide along a perfectly smooth surface without losing any of the gas deflagration, the interior was lined with a smooth tube of cast iron. This was a much larger affair than the celebrated Columbiad of Tampa Town, which had sent the aluminum projectile around the Moon. But what is there that is impossible to the engineers of the modern world?

While the boring went on in the flank of Kilimanjaro, the workmen were busy at the second foundry. While the tube was being built the enormous projectile was in process of manufacture.

All it consisted of was a mass of cast-iron, cylindroconical in form, weighing one hundred and eight thousand tons. It had never been intended to make such a casting in one piece, but to provide one hundred and eighty masses, each of one thousand tons, which could be hoisted into the tube and arranged in front of the meli-melonite so as to form a compact charge.

It thus became necessary to furnish the second foundry with four hundred thousand tons of ore, seventy thousand tons of flux, and four hundred thousand tons of good coal, which at the outset was transformed into two hundred and eighty thousand tons of coke. As the deposits were all in the vicinity, this was only a matter of transport.

The greatest difficulty was the construction of the blast furnaces for dealing with the ore; but nevertheless, before a month was out ten furnaces were at work, capable, each, of an output of one hundred and eighty tons a day. This gave eighteen hundred tons in the twenty-four hours, and a hundred and eighty thousand tons in ten working days.

In the meli-melonite factory the work went on easily, and so secretly that the composition of the explosive was never discovered. All went well; and there was hardly an accident to mar the progress.

The Sultan was delighted. He followed the operations with indefatigable assiduity, and it may be imagined how his Majesty's presence stimulated the zeal of his faithful subjects.

When he asked what it all meant, Barbicane would reply engimatically:

"It is a work which will change the face of the world!"

"A work," Captain Nicholl would add, "that will confer on the Sultan Bali-Bali a glory that will never fade among the monarchs of Eastern Africa!"

And that the Sultan of the Wamasai felt proud there is no need for us to insist!

The Great Projectile

ON the 29th of August the works were completed. The tunnel was lined with the smooth iron tube built up within it. At the end lay stored two thousand tons of meli-melonite in communication with the box of fulminate. Then came the projectile three hundred and forty-five feet long. In front of the projectile was a space of fourteen hundred and fifty feet in which effect would be given to the impulse due to the expansion of the gas.

That being the case, there remained the question —a question of pure ballistics—would the projectile have the trajectory assigned to it by J. T. Maston?

The calculations were correct. They indicated in what measure the projectile would deviate to the east of the meridian of Kilimanjaro in virtue of the earth's rotation, and what would be the form of the hyperbolic curve which it described in virtue of its enormous initial velocity.

Second question: Would it be visible during its flight? No, for when it left the tube plunged in the darkness of the earth, it could not be seen, and besides owing to its moderate height it would have a very considerable angular velocity. Once it entered the zone of light, the smallness of its volume would conceal it from the most powerful glasses, and for a stronger reason it would, when free from the influence of terrestrial attraction, gravitate forever around the Sun.

Assuredly Barbicane & Co. might be proud of the work they were about to complete. Why was not J. T. Maston there to admire the admirable execution of the works which was worthy of the precision of the calculations that had ispired them? And above all things why was he far away when the formidable detonation would awake the echoes of the most distant horizons of Africa?

In thinking of him his colleagues had no notion that he had had to leave Ballistic Cottage after escaping from Baltimore jail, and was now in hiding to save his precious life. They knew not to what a degree public opinion had risen against the North Polar Practical Association. They knew not what would be the massacres, quarterings, and roastings if the people happened to lay hold of them. Indeed they were fortunate that when the mine was fired they could only be saluted by the shouts of the Wamasai.

"At last!" said Captain Nicholl, when on the evening of the 22nd of September they were strolling about at the mouth of the mine.

"Yes! At last! And also—Ha!" and Barbicane gave a sigh of relief.

"If you had to begin again?"

"Bah! We should begin again!"

"What luck," said Nicholl, "that we should have at our disposal this admirable meli-melonite!"

"Which will make you illustrious Nicholl!"

"Doubtless, Barbicane," said the captain modestly. "But do you know how many galleries we should have had to drive in the flanks of Kilimanjaro to obtain the same result if we had only gun-cotton like that which flung our projectile at the Moon?"

"Tell me."

"One hundred and eighty, Barbicane!"

"Well, we would have driven them!"

"And a hundred and eighty projectiles of a hundred and eighty thousand tons!"

"We would have made them, Nicholl!"

There is no nonsense about men of this stamp. But when artillerists have made the round of the Moon, of what could they not be capable?

An Excited Mathematician

AND that very evening, an hour or two only before the discharge was to take place, and while Barbicane and Nicholl were thus congratulating themselves, Alcide Pierdeux, shut up in his room at Baltimore, jumped to his feet and whooped like a Redskin.

"Whoooop! Mr. J. T. Maston! You brute, you shall swallow your problem, you shall! And why didn't I see that before! In the name of a cosine! If I knew where you were I would ask you to supper, and we would have a glass of champagne together at the very moment your gun is to go off!"

And he capered around the room and whirled his arms about like a railway signal gone mad.

"Whoooop, you old plum-tree! You must have had a big bang when you calculated the cannon of Kilimanjaro! Hurrah for the cannon of Kilimanjaro; and how many more would you like? That is not only the *sine qud non*, my boy, but the *sine cannon!* Whoooop!"

CHAPTER XVIII

The Wamasai Wait for the Word to Fire

IT was the evening of the 22nd of September—that memorable date to which public opinion assigned an influence as disastrous as that of the 1st of January, 1000.

Twelve hours after the sun passed the meridian of Kilimanjaro, that is to say, at midnight, the hand of Captain Nicholl would fire the terrible mine.

From Kilimanjaro to Baltimore is one hundred and fourteen degrees, or a difference in time of four hundred and fifty-six minutes. At the moment of discharge it would be twenty-four minutes past five in the afternoon in the great city of Maryland.

The weather was magnificent. The sun had just set on the plains of the Wamasai behind a perfectly clear horizon. Barbicane & Co. could not have wished for a better night, a calmer or a more starlit one, in which to hurl their projectile into space. There was not a cloud to mingle with the artificial vapor developed by the deflagration of the meli-melonite.

Who knows? Perhaps Barbicane and Nicholl were regretting that they could not take their places inside the projectile? In the first second they could have traveled over seventeen hundred miles! After having penetrated the mysteries of the lunar world, they would have penetrated those of the solar world, and under conditions differently interesting from those of Hector Servadac on the comet Gallia!

The Sultan Bali-Bali, the great personages of his court, that is to say, his minister of finance and his minister of works, and the staff of black workmen, were gathered together to watch their final operation. But, with commendable prudence, they had taken up their position three miles away from the mouth of the mine, so as to suffer no inconvenience from the disturbance of the atmosphere.

Around them were a few thousand natives from Kisongo and the villages in the south of the province, who had been ordered by the Sultan to come and admire the spectacle.

A wire connecting an electric battery with the detonator of the fulminate in the tube lay ready to fire the meli-melonite.

As a prelude, an excellent repast had assembled at the same table the Sultan, his American visitors, and the notabilities of the capital—the whole at the cost of Bali-Bali, who did the thing all the better from his knowing he would be reimbursed out of the ample purse of Barbicane & Co.

It was eleven o'clock when the banquet, which had begun at half-past seven, came to an end by a toast

proposed by the Sultan in honor of the engineers of the North Polar Practical Association and the success of their undertaking.

A Failure

IN an hour the modification of the geographical and climatological conditions of the Earth would be an accomplished fact.

Barbicane, his colleague, and the ten foremen began to take up their places around the hut in which the electric battery was placed.

Barbicane, chronometer in hand, counted the minutes—and never did they seem so long—those minutes which seemed not years, but centuries!

At ten minutes to twelve he and Captain Nicholl approached the apparatus which put the wire in communication with the cannon of Kilimanjaro.

The Sultan, his court, the crowd of natives formed an immense circle around them.

It was essential that the discharge should take place at the precise moment indicated in the calculations of J. T. Maston, that is at the instant the sun touched the equinoctial line, which henceforth he would never leave in his apparent orbit around the terrestrial spheroid.

Five minutes to twelve!

Four minutes to twelve!

Three minutes to twelve!

Two minutes to twelve!

One minute to twelve!

Barbicane followed the hand of the chronometer, which was lighted by a lantern held by one of the foremen.

Captain Nicholl stood with his finger on the button of the apparatus ready to close the circuit.

Twenty seconds to twelve!

Ten seconds!

There was not the suspicion of a shake in the hand of the impassible Captain Nicholl. He and his friend were no more excited than when, shut up in the projectile, they waited for the Columbiad to despatch them to the Moon.

Five seconds!

One!

"FIRE!" said Barbicane.

And Nicholl's finger pressed the button.

The noise was truly awful. The echoes rolled in thunders far beyond the realm of the Wamasai. There was a shrill shriek of the projectile which traversed the air under the impetus from milliards of milliards of litres of gas developed by the instantaneous deflagration of two thousand tons of meli-melonite. It seemed as though there had passed over the surface of the Earth one of those storms in which are gathered all the fury of Nature.

And the effect could have been no more terrible if all the guns of all the artilleries of the world had been joined to the thunders of the sky to give one long continuous roar together.

CHAPTER XIX

J. T. Maston Regrets He Was Not Lynched

THE capitals of the globe—and also the less important towns, and even the humbler villages—were, as a rule, waiting for the result in a paroxysm of terror. The newspapers took care that the exact moment corresponding to midnight at Kilimanjaro should be thoroughly well known.

At Baltimore, as we are aware, twelve hours after the passage of the Sun on the meridian of Kilimanjaro, it would be 5:24 p. m.

We need not enlarge on the agony of these moments. The most powerful pen of modern times would be helpless to describe them.

That the inhabitants of Baltimore ran no danger of being swept away by the rising sea may be very true! That they would not see Chesapeake Bay empty itself, and Cape Hatteras at the end become a mountain crest above the dried Atlantic, is agreed! But the city, like many others not menaced with emersion or immersion, might be shattered by the shock, its monuments thrown down, and its streets engulfed in the abysses that might open in the ground! And was there not a justification for fearing for those other parts of the world which would never survive the displacement of the waters?

Why, certainly!

And so every human being in that city felt a cold shiver in the spinal marrow during that fatal minute. Yes! all trembled with terror—but one! And that one was Vitrolic Alcide, who was quietly sipping a cup of hot coffee as if he and the old world would last forever.

5:24 p. m., answering to Kilimanjaro midnight, passed.

At Baltimore—nothing occurred!

At London, Berlin, Paris, Rome, Constantinople—nothing! Not the least shock!

Professor Milne, in the coal-pit at Kagoshina, in Japan, gazed steadily at the seismograph, and saw not the least abnormal movement in the crust of the Earth in that part of the world.

At Baltimore there was no sign of any disturbance whatsoever. The sky was cloudy, and when the night came it was impossible to see if the apparent movement of the stars had changed—which would, of course, have indicated a change in the Earth's axis.

Explanation

WHAT a night did J. T. Maston pass in his retreat, unknown to all save Mrs. Scorbitt! He raged! He raved! He could not keep still. Would that he had been a few days older, to see if the curve of the Sun was modified—an indisputable proof of the success of the operation. On the 23rd the change would not be noticeable, for on that day the Sun invariably rises due east in every country of the globe.

In the morning the Sun rose just as usual.

Major Donellan and his friends were on the terrace of their hotel. They had furnished themselves with instruments of extreme precision, which would show if the Sun described its curve in the plane of the Equator.

There was nothing to show that it did; and a few minutes after it had risen the radiant disk inclined toward the southern hemisphere.

There was no change in its apparent path.

The Major and his colleagues expressed their delight by giving three cheers for the Sun.

The sky was superb, the horizon quite clear from the mists of the night, and never did the glorious

orb present himself under greater conditions of splendor before a wondering people.

"And the very place noted by the laws of astronomy!" said Baldenak.

"Of our old astronomy," said Karkof, "which these madmen attempted to annihilate!"

"To their cost and shame," said Jansen.

"And the Arctic regions will remain under their eternal ice!" said Professor Harald.

"Hurrah for the Sun!" shouted Donellan. "He is good enough for us as he is!"

"Hurrah! hurrah!" said the others on the balcony.

Then it was that Tedrin, who had said nothing, remarked judiciously, "Perhaps they have not fired!"

"Not fired?" ejaculated the Major aghast.

And that, with a different intonation, was what J. T. Maston and Mrs. Scorbitt said.

"Not fired?"

And that was what the wise and the foolish were asking; and it was what Alcide Pierdeux said, adding, "Whether they fired or no, it does not matter! The Earth will still spin on its old axis!"

No one knew what had passed at Kilimanjaro; but before the end of the day an answer was given to the question that puzzled humanity.

There was a telegram from Zanzibar:—

"To John S. Wright, Washington, U. S. A.

"Zanzibar, 23rd September, 7:27 a. m., local time. Discharge took place at midnight from cannon on southern side of Kilimanjaro. Projectile traveled with fearful shriek. Awful explosion. Province devastated by a tornado. Sea risen in the Mozambique Channel. Many ships damaged and driven on shore. Towns and villages annihilated. All well, as usual.—Richard W. Trust, U. S. Consul."

Yes. All well as usual! Nothing changed in the state of affairs except the disasters among the Wamasai caused by the artificial tornado and the wrecks caused by the risen sea.

And had it not been the same when the famous Columbia had sent its projectile toward the Moon? The shock communicated to the soil of Florida had only been experienced for a hundred miles around. But this time the effect ought to have been a hundred times as great.

Under any circumstances the telegram informed the world of two matters of interest:—

1. The enormous cannon had been made in the flank of Kilimanjaro.
2. It had been fired at the time stated.

Paying the African Money

AND then the world gave a shout of satisfaction, which was followed by an immense shout of laughter.

Barbicane & Co.'s attempt had failed piteously! J. T. Maston's calculations might as well be put in the wastepaper basket! The North Polar Practical Association had nothing now to do but go into another kind of liquidation!

Could it be possible that the secretary of the Gun Club had made a mistake?

"I would rather believe I am deceived in the affection with which he inspires me," said Mrs. Evangelina Scorbitt.

And if there was a discomfited being on the face of the planet it was J. T. Maston. When he saw that nothing had changed in the conditions of the Earth's movement, he was buoyed up with hope that some accident had retarded the work of Barbicane and Nicholl.

But since the Zanzibar telegram he had to admit that the experiment had failed.

Failed? And the equations, the formulæ from which he had deduced the success of the enterprise! Was the gun not long enough, the projectile not heavy enough, the explosive not strong enough? No! It was inadmissible!

J. T. Maston was in such a state of excitement that he declared he would leave his retreat. Mrs. Scorbit tried in vain to prevent him. Not that she feared for his life, for the danger was over. But the pleasantries that would be showered on the unhappy calculator, the jokes that would rain on his work—she would have spared him.

And, still more serious, what was the reception the Gun Club would give him? Would they retain him as their secretary after a failure that covered them with ridicule? Was not he, the author of the calculations, entirely responsible for the collapse?

He would listen to nothing. He would yield neither to the tears nor prayers of Mrs. Scorbitt. He came out of the house in which he was hidden. He appeared in the streets of Baltimore. He was recognized, and those whom he had menaced in their fortune and existence, whose anxiety he had prolonged by his obstinate silence, took vengeance on him by deriding him in every way.

The street boys shouted after him, "Go along, old Pole-shifter!" "Hallo, old clock-jobber!" "How's the figuring tinker?"

And a mob gathered and began to hustle him, and he had to seek refuge in the New Park mansion, where Mrs. Scorbitt did her best to console him. It was in vain.

J. T. Maston—after the example of Niobe—would not be consoled. His gun had produced no more effect on the terrestrial spheroid than an ordinary fire cracker.

A fortnight went by, and the world had already forgotten the North Polar Practical Association. A fortnight, and no news of Barbicane or Captain Nicholl! Had they perished in the counter-shock of the explosion, victims to the ravages produced among the Wamasai? Had they paid with their lives for the biggest mystification of modern times?

No. At the explosion Barbicane and Nicholl had been thrown down; so had the Sultan, and several thousand natives; but they had all risen again safe and sound.

"Is it a success?" asked Bali-Bali, rubbing his shoulders.

"Can you doubt it?"

"I—doubt it! But when shall we know?"

"In a day or two!" said Barbicane.

Did he see that the attempt had failed?

Possibly. But he never would have admitted it to the monarch of the Wamasai.

Two days afterward Barbicane and Nicholl took their leave of Bali-Bali, not without paying a good round sum for the destruction done to the surface of his kingdom. And as the money went to his own private pocket, and his subjects got not a dollar, he had no cause to regret so lucrative an affair.

Then the two friends, followed by their foremen, reached Zanzibar, where they found a vessel starting for Suez. There, under assumed names, they took passage to Marseilles, whence by the P. L. M. and the Ouest they reached Havre, where they went on board the *Bourgogne* and crossed the Atlantic.

In twenty-two days after they left the Wamasai they were in New York.

On the 15th of October, at three o'clock in the afternoon, they knocked at the door of the mansion in New Park.

A minute afterward they were in the presence of Mrs. Scorbitt and J. T. Maston.

CHAPTER XX

The End of This Remarkable Story

"BARBICANE? Nicholl?"

"Maston!"

"You?"

"We!"

And in that pronoun, spoken simultaneously by the two in a singular tone, there was everything that could be said in the way of irony and reproach.

J. T. Maston passed his iron hook across his forehead. Then in a voice that hissed between his lips he asked:

"Your gallery at Kilimanjaro was two thousand feet long and ninety in diameter?"

"Yes."

"Your projectile weighed one hundred and eighty thousand tons?"

"Yes."

"And you used two thousand tons of meli-melonite?"

"Yes."

The three yes's fell like blows of a sledge-hammer on J. T. Maston's occiput.

"Then I conclude—" he said.

"What?" asked Barbicane.

"That, as the experiment failed, the explosive did not give the projectile the necessary initial velocity!"

"Indeed!" said Captain Nicholl.

"And that your meli-melonite is only fit for pop-guns!"

Captain Nicholl started at the insult.

"Maston!" he exclaimed.

"Nicholl!"

"Will you fight me with meli-melonite?"

"No; with gun-cotton. It is surer!"

Mrs. Scorbitt hastened to interfere.

"Gentlemen! Gentlemen!" she said. "Between friends!"

Then Impey Barbicane put in a word very quietly. "What is the use of abusing each other? It is certain that the calculations of our friend Maston were correct, and it is certain that the explosive of our friend Nicholl was sufficient! We followed exactly the teachings of science! And we failed! For what reason? Probably we shall never know!"

"Well," said the secretary of the Gun Club; "we will try it again!"

"And the money which has been lost?" observed Captain Nicholl.

"And public opinion, which will not permit you to again risk the fate of the world?" added Mrs. Scorbitt.

What will become of the North Pole?" asked Nicholl.

"What is the value of the shares in the North Polar Practical Association?" asked Barbicane.

Oh, what a fall there had been thereof! The certificates could be bought at waste-paper prices.

Ridicule Develops

SUCH was the memorable fiasco of the gigantic project of Barbicane & Co.

If ever unfortunate engineers were overwhelmed with ridicule, if ever there were amusing articles in the newspapers, caricatures, comic songs, parodies—it was then. Barbicane, the director of the Association, the members of the Gun Club, were literally covered with scorn. The storm of contempt was so thoroughly American that it was untranslatable even in Volapuk. And Europe joined in with such vigor that at last America was scandalized. And then remembering that Barbicane, Nicholl, and Maston were of American birth, and belonged to the famous club of Baltimore, a reaction in their favor set in, which was almost strong enough to make the United States declare war against the Old World.

But was it ever to be known why the enterprise failed? Did the failure prove that the project was impossible, that the forces of which man disposes will never be sufficient to bring about a change in the Earth's diurnal movement, that never would the Polar regions be displaced in latitude to such an extent that their icy mantle will be melted by the solar rays?

That this was the case appeared undoubted a few days after the return of Barbicane and Nicholl to the United States.

A letter appeared in the Parisian *Temps* of the 17th of October, which did mankind a service in confirming it in its feeling of security.

A Letter from the Great Mathematician

THE letter was the following:—

"The abortive attempt to furnish the Earth with a new axis is now known. Nevertheless, the calculations of J. T. Maston were correctly founded, and would have produced the desired results if by some inexplicable distraction they had not been nullified by an error at the outset.

"In fact, the celebrated secretary of the Gun Club took for his basis the circumference of the terrestrial spheroid at forty thousand metres instead of forty million metres—and that nullified the solution.

"How came he to make such an error? What could have caused it? How could so remarkable a mathematician have made such a mistake? Conjecture is vain.

"There is no doubt that the problem of the change of the terrestrial axis was correctly stated, and it should have been correctly worked out. But the initial error of three noughts produced an error of twelve noughts in the final result.

"It is not a cannon a million times as large as a four hundred-pounder, but a million million million such cannons, hurling a million million million projectiles of one hundred and eighty thousand tons, that would displace the Pole 23° 28', supposing that melio-melonite has the expansive power attributed to it by Captain Nicholl.

"In short, the discharge of the projectile at Kili-

manjaro has been to displace the Pole three microns —that is, one ten-thousandth of an inch, and the maximum effect on the level of the sea must have been just nine-thousandths of a micron.

"The projectile has become a small planet and henceforth belongs to our system, in which it is retained by the solar attraction.

"ALCIDE PIERDEUX."

So it was some distraction of J. T. Maston's, an error of three noughts at the beginning of his calculations, that had brought this humiliating disaster on Barbicane & Co.

The members of the Gun Club were furious, but among the general public a reaction arose in favor of the poor fellow. After all, it was this mistake which had caused all the evil—or rather all the good, for it saved the world from ruin.

And so compliments came in from all parts, and letters arrived in millions congratulating J. T. Maston on having forgotten his three noughts!

But that extraordinary man, more deeply disgusted than ever, would not listen to the congratulatory world. Barbicane, Nicholl, Tom Hunter with the wooden leg, Colonel Bloomsberry, the brisk Bilsby, and their friends, would never forgive him.

But at least there remained Mrs. Scorbitt!

At first J. T. Maston refused to admit that he had made a mistake; and set to work to check his calculations.

Vitriolic Alcide was, however, accurate. And that was why, when he found the error at the last moment, and had no time to reassure his fellow-men he so calmly sipped his pleasant hot cup of coffee while the spinal marrow was so unpleasantly cool in his fellow-men's backs.

There was no disguising the fact. Three noughts had slipped out of the terrestial waist!

Then it was that J. T. Maston remembered! It was at the beginning of his labors when he had shut himself up in Ballistic Cottage. He had written the number of 40,000,000 on the blackboard.

At that moment came a hurried tinkle from the telephone. He had gone to the instrument. He had exchanged a few words with Mrs. Scorbitt. There was a flash of lightning that upset him and his blackboard. He picked himself and his blackboard up. He began to write in the figures half rubbed out by the fall. He had just written 40,000—when the bell rang a second time. And when he returned to work he had forgotten the three last noughts in the measure of the Earth's equator!

Now all that was the fault of Mrs. Scorbitt. If she had not bothered him he would never have been knocked down by the return shock of that electrical discharge.

And so the unhappy woman also received a shock when J. T. Maston told her how the mistake had been made. Yes! She was the cause of the disaster! It was her doing that J. T. Maston was now dishonored for the many years he had to live, for it was the general custom to die as centenarians in the Gun Club.

And after the interview J. T. Maston fled from the house in New Park. He went back to Ballistic Cottage. He strode about his work-room saying to himself:

"Now I am good for nothing in the world!"

"Not even if you were to marry?" said a voice which emotion made heartrending.

It was Mrs. Scorbitt.

Tearful and distracted she had followed J. T. Maston.

"Dear Maston!" said she.

"Well! Yes!" said he; "on one condition—that I never again touch mathematics."

A Happy Marriage

"I ABOMINATE them!" said the widow.

And thus it was that Mrs. Scorbitt became Mrs. J. T. Maston.

As to Alcide Pierdeux, what honor, what celebrity that letter brought him and his old school! Translated into all languages, copied into all newspapers, it made his name known throughout the world.

It happened, therefore, that the father of the pretty Provençale, who had refused him his daughter's hand because he was too learned, came to read the famous letter in the *Petit Marseillais*. Without any assistance he managed to make out its meaning. And then he was seized with remorse, and, as a preliminary measure, sent Vitriolic Alcide an invitation to dinner.

And so the world was left as it was.

No attempt was made by Barbicane & Co. to resume business. Any attempt would have been futile. Aclide's contention was indisputable. It could be shown by mechanics that to effect a displacement of 23° 28', even with meli-melonite, so many Kilimanjaro guns or mines would be required, that the surface of the earth could not hold them.

The world's inhabitants could thus sleep in peace. To modify the conditions of the Earth's movement is beyond the powers of man. It is not given to mankind to change the order established by the Creator in the system of the Universe.

THE END

Hail And Good-By

By LELAND S. COPELAND

Where counter star-streams meet and blend,
  Where suns and comets fly,
We wake at last in human form
  To ponder whence and why.
A billion billion ages lapsed,
  A trillion worlds went by,
Ere we could rise from light and dust
  To labor, love, and die.

Far out within the Milky Way
  Our pellet Earth is cast,
Whose children dream that mind will live
  When all the stars have passed.
We cannot glimpse the future's gift,
  But one thought holds us fast—
To think, to try, is good, and then
  To vanish in the Vast.

The ISLAND of DR. MOREAU

By H. G. Wells

Author of "The War of the Worlds", "The Abyss"

Then, suddenly, far in front of me, I saw first one and then several figures emerging from the bushes. . . . Turning seaward I walked straight into the water. The water was very shallow at first. I was thirty yards out before the waves reached to my waist.

Introduction

ON February the First, 1887, the *Lady Vain* was lost by collision with a derelict when about in latitude 1° S. and longitude 107° W.

On January the Fifth, 1888—that is eleven months and four days after—my uncle, Edward Prendick, a private gentleman, who certainly went aboard the *Lady Vain* at Callao, and who had been considered drowned, was picked up in latitude 5° 3' S. and longitude 101° W. in a small open boat of which the name was illegible, but which is supposed to have belonged to the missing schooner *Ipecacuanha*. He gave such a strange account of himself that he was supposed demented. Subsequently he alleged that his mind was a blank from the moment of his escape from the *Lady Vain*. His case was discussed among psychologists at the time as a curious instance of the lapse of memory consequent upon physical and mental stress. The following narrative was found among his papers by the undersigned, his nephew and heir, but unaccompanied by any definite request for publication.

The only island known to exist in the region in which my ucle was picked up is Noble's Isle, a small volcanic islet and uninhabited. It was visited in 1891 by H. M. S. *Scorpion*. A party of sailors then landed, but found nothing living thereon except certain curious white moths, some hogs and rabbits, and some rather peculiar rats. So that this narrative is without confirmation in its most essential particular. With that understood, there seems no harm in putting this strange story before the public in accordance, as I believe, with my uncle's intentions. There is at least this much in its behalf: my uncle passed out of human knowledge about latitude 5° S. and longitude 105° E., and reappeared in the same part of the ocean after a space of eleven months. In some way he must have lived during the interval. And it seems that a schooner called the *Ipecacuanha* with a drunken captain, John Davies, did start from Africa with a puma and certain other animals aboard in January, 1887, that the vessel was well known at several ports in the South Pacific, and that it finally disappeared from those seas (with a considerable amount of copra aboard), sailing to its unknown fate from Bayna in December, 1887, a date that tallies entirely with my uncle's story.

CHARLES EDWARD PRENDICK.

THE ISLAND OF DR. MOREAU

By H. G. WELLS

(The Story written by Edward Prendick.)

CHAPTER I.

In the Dingey of the "Lady Vain"

I DO not propose to add anything to what has already been written concerning the loss of the "*Lady Vain*." As every one knows, she collided with a derelict when ten days out from Callao. The longboat, with seven of the crew, was picked up eighteen days after by H. M. gunboat "*Myrtle*," and the story of their terrible privations has become quite as well known as the far more horrible "*Medusa*" case. But I have to add to the published story of the "*Lady Vain*" another, possibly as horrible and far stranger. It has hitherto been supposed that the four men who were in the dingey perished, but this is incorrect. I have the best of evidence for this assertion: I was one of the four men.

HERE is a tremendous story by our well-known author, a story which, for gripping and human interest, probably has no parallel in the annals of our whole modern literature. It is, frankly, not a very pleasant story to read, but it is certainly the most daring and unusual piece of literature in existence today.

Mr. Wells himself calls the story "A Possibility." We do not wish to disagree with him here, but it is our opinion that Mr. Wells has tried to sketch a travesty upon human beings, and in this he has more than succeeded. The thin veneer of civilization with which we humans are covered is ruthlessly torn aside in Mr. Wells' analogy of the human race, and it leaves us much as we really are without the veneer.

This is a really engrossing story, superb all the way through.

But in the first place I must state that there never were *four* men in the dingey,—the number was three. Constans, who was "seen by the captain to jump into the gig,"[1] luckily for us and unluckily for himself did not reach us. He came down out of the tangle of ropes under the stays of the smashed bowsprit, some rope caught his heel as he let go, and he hung for a moment head downward, and then fell and struck a block or spar floating in the water. We pulled towards him, but he never came up.

I say luckily for us he did not reach us, and I might almost say luckily for himself; for we had only a small breaker of water and some soddened ship's biscuits with us, so sudden had been the alarm, so unprepared the ship for any disaster. We thought the people on the launch would be better provisioned (though it seems they were not), and we tried to hail them. They could not have heard us, and the next morning when the drizzle cleared,—which was not until past midday,—we could see nothing of them. We could not stand up to look about us, because of the pitching of the boat. The two other men who had escaped so far with me were a man named Helmar, a passenger like myself, and a seaman whose name I don't know,—a short sturdy man, with a stammer.

We drifted famishing, and, after our water had come to an end, tormented by an intolerable thirst, for eight days altogether. After the second day the sea subsided slowly to a glassy calm. It is quite impossible for the ordinary reader to imagine those eight days. He has not, luckily for himself, any-

[1] Daily News, March 17, 1887.

thing in his memory to imagine with. After the first day we said little to one another, and lay in our places in the boat and stared at the horizon, or watched, with eyes that grew larger and more haggard every day, the misery and weakness gaining upon our companions. The sun became pitiless. The water ended on the fourth day, and we were already thinking strange things and saying them with our eyes; but it was, I think, the sixth before Helmar gave voice to the thing we had all been thinking. I remember our voices were dry and thin, so that we bent towards one another and spared our words. I stood out against it with all my might, was rather for scuttling the boat and perishing together among the sharks that followed us; but when Helmar said that if his proposal was accepted we should have drink, the sailor came round to him.

I would not draw lots however, and in the night the sailor whispered to Helmar again and again, and I sat in the bows with my clasp-knife in my hand, though I doubt if I had the stuff in me to fight; and in the morning I agreed to Helmar's proposal, and we handed halfpence to find the odd man. The lot fell upon the sailor; but he was the strongest of us and would not abide by it, and attacked Helmar with his hands. They grappled together and almost stood up. I crawled along the boat to them, intending to help Helmar by grasping the sailor's leg; but the sailor stumbled with the swaying of the boat, and the two fell upon the gunwale and rolled overboard together. They sank like stones. I remember laughing at that, and wondering why I laughed. The laugh caught me suddenly like a thing from without.

I lay across on one of the thwarts for I know not how long, thinking that if I had the strength I would drink sea-water and madden myself to die quickly. And even as I lay there I saw, with no more interest than if it had been a picture, a sail come up towards me over the skyline. My mind must have been wandering, and yet I remember all that happened, quite distinctly. I remember how my head swayed with the seas, and the horizon with the sail above it danced up and down; but I also remember as distinctly that I had a persuasion that I was dead, and that I thought what a jest it was that they should come too late by such a little to catch me in my body.

For an endless period, it seemed to me, I lay with my head on the thwart watching the schooner (she was a little vessel, schooner-rigged, fore and aft) come up out of the sea. She kept tacking to and fro in a widening compass, for she was working dead into the wind. It never entered my head to attempt to attract attention, and I do not remember anything distinctly after the sight of her side until I found myself in a little cabin aft. There's a dim half-memory of being lifted up to the gangway, and of a big red countenance covered with freckles and surrounded with red hair staring at me over the bulwarks. I also had a disconnected impression of a dark face, with extraordinary eyes, close to mine; but that I thought was a nightmare, until I met it again. I fancy I recollect some stuff being poured in between my teeth; and that is all.

CHAPTER II.

The Man Who Was Going Nowhere

THE cabin in which I found myself was small and rather untidy. A youngish man with flaxen hair, a bristly straw-coloured moustache, and a dropping nether lip, was sitting and holding my wrist. For a minute we stared at each other without speaking. He had watery grey eyes, oddly void of expression. Then just overhead came a sound like an iron bedstead being knocked about, and the low angry growling of some large animal. At the same time the man spoke. He repeated his question,—

"How do you feel now?"

I think I said I felt all right. I could not recollect how I had got there. He must have seen the question in my face, for my voice was inaccessible to me.

"You were picked up in a boat, starving. The name on the boat was the *'Lady Vain,'* and there were spots of blood on the gunwale."

At the same time my eye caught my hand, thin so that it looked like a dirty skin-purse full of loose bones, and all the business of the boat came back to me.

"Have some of this," said he, and gave me a dose of some scarlet stuff, iced.

It tasted like blood, and made me feel stronger.

"You were in luck," said he, "to get picked up by a ship with a medical man aboard." He spoke with a slobbering articulation, with the ghost of a lisp.

"What ship is this?" I said slowly, hoarse from my long silence.

"It's a little trader from Arica and Callao. I never asked where she came from in the beginning, —out of the land of born fools, I guess. I'm a passenger myself, from Arica. The silly ass who owns her,—he's captain too, named Davies,—he's lost his certificate, or something. You know the kind of man,—calls the thing the *'Ipecacuanha,'* of all silly, infernal names; though when there's much of a sea without any wind, she certainly acts according."

(Then the noise overhead began again, a snarling growl and the voice of a human being together. Then another voice, telling some "Heaven-forsaken idiot" to desist.)

"You were nearly dead," said my interlocutor. "It was a very near thing, indeed. But I've put some stuff into you now. Notice your arm's sore? Injections. You've been insensible for nearly thirty hours."

I thought slowly. (I was distracted now by the yelping of a number of dogs.) "Am I eligible for solid food?" I asked.

"Thanks to me," he said. "Even now the mutton is boiling."

"Yes," I said with assurance; "I could eat some mutton."

"But," said he with a momentary hesitation, "you know I'm dying to hear of how you came to be alone in that boat. *Damn that howling!*" I thought I detected a certain suspicion in his eyes.

He suddenly left the cabin, and I heard him in violent controversy with some one, who seemed to me to talk gibberish in response to him. The mat-

ter sounded as though it ended in blows, but in that I thought my ears were mistaken. Then he shouted at the dogs, and returned to the cabin.

"Well? said he in the doorway. "You were just beginning to tell me."

I told him my name, Edward Prendick, and how I had taken to Natural History as a relief from the dullness of my confortable independence.

He seemed interested in this. "I've done some science myself. I did Biology at University College,—getting out the ovary of the earthworm and the radula of the snail, and all that. Lord! It's ten years ago. But go on! go on! tell me about the boat."

He was evidently satisfied with the frankness of my story, which I told in concise sentences enough, for I felt horribly weak; and when it was finished he reverted at once to the topic of Natural History and his own biological studies. He began to question me closely about Tottenham Court Road and Gower Street. "Is Caplatzi still flourishing? What a shop that was!" He had evidently been a very ordinary medical student, and drifted incontinently to the topic of the music halls. He told me some anecdotes. "Left it all," he said, "ten years ago. How jolly it all used to be! But I made a young ass of myself,—played myself out before I was twenty-one. I daresay it's all different now. But I must look up that ass of a cook, and see what he's done to your mutton."

The growling overhead was renewed, so suddenly and with so much savage anger that it startled me. "What's that?" I called after him, but the door had closed. He came back again with the boiled mutton, and I was so excited by the appetising smell of it that I forgot the noise of the beast that had troubled me.

After a day of alternate sleep and feeding I was so far recovered as to be able to get from my bunk to the scuttle, and see the green seas trying to keep pace with us. I judged the schooner was running before the wind. Montgomery—that was the name of the flaxen-haired man—came in again as I stood there, and I asked him for some clothes. He lent me some duck things of his own, for those I had worn in the boat had been thrown overboard. They were rather loose for me, for he was large and long in his limbs. He told me casually that the captain was three-parts drunk in his own cabin. As I assumed the clothes, I began asking him some questions about the destination of the ship. He said the ship was bound to Hawaii, but that it had to land him first.

"Where?" said I.

"It's an island, where I live. So far as I know, it hasn't got a name."

He stared at me with his nether lip dropping, and looked so wilfully stupid of a sudden that it came into my head that he desired to avoid my questions. I had the discretion to ask no more.

CHAPTER III.

The Strange Face

WE left the cabin and found a man at the companion obstructing our way. He was standing on the ladder with his back to us, peering over the combing of the hatchway. He was, I could see, a mishapen man, short, broad and clumsy, with a crooked back, a hairy neck, and a head sunk between his shoulders. He was dressed in dark-blue serge, and had peculiarly thick, coarse, black hair. I heard the unseen dogs growl furiously, and forthwith he ducked back,—coming into contact with the hand I put out to fend him off from myself. He turned with animal swiftness.

In some indefinable way the black face thus flashed upon me shocked me profoundly. It was a singularly deformed one. The facial part projected, forming something dimly suggestive of a muzzle, and the huge half-open mouth showed as big white teeth as I had ever seen in a human mouth. His eyes were bloodshot at the edges, with scarcely a rim of white round the hazel pupils. There was a curious glow of excitement in his face.

"Confound you!" said Montgomery. "Why the devil don't you get out of the way?"

The black-faced man started aside without a word. I went on up the companion, staring at him instinctively as I did so. Montgomery stayed at the foot for a moment. "You have no business here, you know," he said in a deliberate tone. "Your place is forward."

The black-faced man cowered. "They—won't have me forward." He spoke slowly, with a queer, hoarse quality in his voice.

"Won't have you forward!" said Montgomery, in a menacing voice. "But I tell you to go!" He was on the brink of saying something further, then looked up at me suddenly and followed me up the ladder.

I had paused half way through the hatchway, looking back, still astonished beyond measure at the grotesque ugliness of this black-faced creature. I had never beheld such a repulsive and extraordinary face before, and yet—if the contradiction is credible—I experienced at the same time an odd feeling that in some way I *had* already encountered exactly the features and gestures that now amazed me. Afterwards it occurred to me that probably I had seen him as I was lifted aboard; and yet that scarcely satisfied my suspicion of a previous acquaintance. Yet how one could have set eyes on so singular a face and yet have forgotten the precise occasion, passed my imagination.

Montgomery's movement to follow me released my attention, and I turned and looked about me at the flush deck of the little schooner. I was already half prepared by the sounds I had heard for what I saw. Certainly I never beheld a deck so dirty. It was littered with scraps of carrot, shreds of green stuff, and indescribable filth. Fastened by chains to the mainmast were a number of grisly staghounds, who now began leaping and barking at me, and by the mizzen a huge puma was cramped in a little iron cage far too small even to give it turning room. Farther under the starboard bulwark were some big hutches containing a number of rabbits, and a solitary llama was squeezed in a mere box of a cage forward. The dogs were muzzled by leather straps. The only human being on deck was a gaunt and silent sailor at the wheel.

The patched and dirty lower sails were tense in the wind, and up aloft the little ship seemed carrying every sail she had. The sky was clear, the sun midway down the western sky; long waves, capped

by the breeze with froth, were running with us. We went past the steersman to the taffrail, and saw the water come foaming under the stern and the bubbles go dancing and vanishing in her wake. I turned and surveyed the unsavoury length of the ship.

"Is this an ocean menagerie?" said I.

"Looks like it," said Montgomery.

"What are these beasts for? Merchandise, curios? Does the captain think he is going to sell them somewhere in the South Seas?"

"It looks like it, doesn't it?" said Montgomery, and turned towards the wake again.

Suddenly we heard a yelp and a volley of furious blasphemy from the companion hatchway, and the deformed man with the black face came up hurriedly. He was immediately followed by a heavy red-haired man in a white cap. At the sight of the former the staghounds, who had all tired of barking at me by this time, became furiously excited, howling and leaping against their chains. The black hesitated before them, and this gave the red-haired man time to come up with him and deliver a tremendous blow between the shoulder-blades. The poor devil went down like a felled ox, and rolled in the dirt among the furiously excited dogs. It was lucky for him that they were muzzled. The red-haired man gave a yawp of exultation and stood staggering, and as it seemed to me in serious danger of either going backwards down the companion hatchway or forward upon his victim.

So soon as the second man had appeared, Montgomery had started forward. "Steady on there!" he cried, in a tone of remonstrance. A couple of sailors appeared on the forecastle. The black-faced man, howling in a singular voice, rolled about under the feet of the dogs. No one attempted to help him. The brutes did their best to worry him, butting their muzzles at him. There was a quick dance of their lithe grey-figured bodies, over the clumsy prostrate figure. The sailors forward shouted, as though it was admirable sport. Montgomery gave an angry exclamation, and went striding down the deck, and I followed him. The black-faced man scrambled up and staggered forward, going and leaning over the bulwark by the main shrouds, where he remained, panting and glaring over his shoulder at the dogs. The red-haired man laughed a satisfied laugh.

"Look here, Captain," said Montgomery, with his lisp a little accentuated, gripping the elbows of the red-haired man, "this won't do!"

I stood behind Montgomery. The captain came half round, and regarded him with the dull and solemn eyes of a drunken man. "Wha' won't do?" he said, and added, after looking sleepily into Montgomery's face for a minute, "Blasted Sawbones!"

With a sudden movement he shook his arm free, and after two ineffectual attempts stuck his freckled fists into his side pockets.

"That man's a passenger," said Montgomery. "I'd advise you to keep your hands off him."

"Go to hell!" said the captain, loudly. He suddenly turned and staggered towards the side. "Do what I like on my own ship," he said.

I think Montgomery might have left him then, seeing the brute was drunk; but he only turned a shade paler, and followed the captain to the bulwarks.

"Look you here, Captain," he said; "that man of mine is not to be ill-treated. He has been hazed ever since he came aboard."

For a minute, alcoholic fumes kept the captain speechless. "Blasted Sawbones!" was all he considered necessary.

I could see that Montgomery had one of those slow, pertinacious tempers that will warm day after day to a white heat, and never again cool to forgiveness; and I saw too that this quarrel had been some time growing. "The man's drunk," said I, perhaps officiously; "you'll do no good."

Montgomery gave an ugly twist to his dropping lip. "He's always drunk. Do you think that excuses his assaulting his passengers?"

"My ship," began the captain, waving his hand unsteadily towards the cages, "was a clean ship. Look at it now!" It was certainly anything but clean. "Crew," continued the captain, "clean, respectable crew."

"You agreed to take the beasts."

"I wish I'd never set eyes on your infernal island. What the devil—want beasts for on an island like that? Then, that man of yours—understood he was a man. He's a lunatic; and he hadn't no business aft. Do you think the whole damned ship belongs to you?"

"Your sailors began to haze the poor devil as soon as he came aboard."

"That's just what he is—he's a devil! an ugly devil! My men can't stand him. *I* can't stand him. None of us can's stand him. Nor *you* either!"

Montgomery turned away. "*You* leave that man alone, anyhow," he said, nodding his head as he spoke.

But the captain meant to quarrel now. He raised his voice. "If he comes this end of the ship again I'll cut his insides out, I tell you. Cut out his blasted insides! Who are *you*, to tell *me* what *I'm* to do? I tell you I'm captain of this ship,—captain and owner. I'm the law here, I tell you,—the law and the prophets. I bargained to take a man and his attendant to and from Arica, and bring back some animals. I never bargained to carry a mad devil and a silly Sawbones, a—"

Well, never mind what he called Montgomery. I saw the latter take a step forward, and interposed. "He's drunk," said I. The captain began some abuse even fouler that the last. "Shut up!" I said, turning on him sharply, for I had seen danger in Montgomery's white face. With that I brought the downpour on myself.

However, I was glad to avert what was uncommonly near a scuffle, even at the price of the captain's drunken ill-will. I do not think I have ever heard quite so much vile language come in a continuous stream from any man's lips before, though I have frequented eccentric company enough. I found some of it hard to endure, though I am a mild-tempered man; but, certainly, when I told the captain to "shut up" I had forgotten that I was merely a bit of human flotsam, cut off from my resources and with my fare unpaid; a mere casual dependant on the bounty, or speculative enterprise, of the ship. He reminded me of it with considerable vigour; but at any rate I prevented a fight.

CHAPTER IV.

At the Schooner's Rail

THAT night land was sighted after sundown, and the schooner hove to. Montgomery intimated that was his destination. It was too far to see any details; it seemed to me then simply a low-lying batch of dim blue in the uncertain blue-grey sea. An almost vertical streak of smoke went up from it into the sky. The captain was not on deck when it was sighted. After he had vented his wrath on me he had staggered below, and I understand he went to sleep on the floor of his own cabin. The mate practically assumed the command. He was the gaunt, taciturn individual we had seen at the wheel. Apparently he was in an evil temper with Montgomery. He took not the slightest notice of either of us. We dined with him in a sulky silence, after a few ineffectual efforts on my part to talk. It struck me too that the men regarded my companion and his animals in a singularly unfriendly manner. I found Montgomery very reticent about his purpose with these creatures, and about his destination; and though I was sensible of a growing curiosity as to both, I did not press him.

We remained talking on the quarter deck until the sky was thick with stars. Except for an occasional sound in the yellow-lit forecastle and a movement of the animals now and then, the night was very still. The puma lay crouched together, watching us with shining eyes, a black heap in the corner of its cage. Montgomery produced some cigars. He talked to me of London in a tone of half-painful reminiscence, asking all kinds of questions about changes that had taken place. He spoke like a man who had loved his life there, and had been suddenly and irrevocably cut off from it. I gossiped as well as I could of this and that. All the time the strangeness of him was shaping itself in my mind; and as I talked I peered at his odd, pallid face in the dim light of the binnacle lantern behind me. Then I looked out at the darkling sea, where in the dimness his little island was hidden.

This man, it seemed to me, had come out of Immensity merely to save my life. To-morrow he would drop over the side, and vanish again out of my existence. Even had it been under commonplace circumstances, it would have made me a trifle thoughtful; but in the first place was the singularity of an educated man living on this unknown little island, and coupled with that the extraordinary nature of his luggage. I found myself repeating the captain's question, What did he want with the beasts? Why, too, had he pretended they were not his when I had remarked about them at first? Then, again, in his personal attendant there was a bizarre quality which had impressed me profoundly. These circumstances threw a haze of mystery round the man. They laid hold of my imagination, and hampered my tongue.

Towards midnight our talk of London died away, and we stood side by side leaning over the bulwarks and staring dreamily over the silent, starlit sea, each pursuing his own thoughts. It was the atmosphere for sentiment, and I began upon my gratitude.

"If I may say it," said I, after a time, "you have saved my life."

"Chance," he answered. "Just chance."

"I prefer to make my thanks to the accessible agent."

"Thank no one. You had the need, and I had the knowledge; and I injected and fed you much as I might have collected a specimen. I was bored, and wanted something to do. If I'd been jaded that day, or hadn't liked your face, well—it's a curious question where you would have been now!"

This damped my mood a little. "At any rate," I began.

"It's a chance, I tell you," he interrupted,—"as everything is in a man's life. Only the asses won't see it! Why am I here now, an outcast from civilisation, instead of being a happy man enjoying all the pleasures of London? Simply because eleven years ago—I lost my head for ten minutes on a foggy night."

He stopped. "Yes?" said I.

"That's all."

We relapsed into silence. Presently he laughed. "There's something in this starlight that loosens one's tongue. I'm an ass, and yet somehow I would like to tell you."

"Whatever you tell me, you may rely upon my keeping to myself—if that's it."

He was on the point of beginning, and then shook his head, doubtfully.

"Don't," said I. "It is all the same to me. After all, it is better to keep your secret. There's nothing gained but a little relief if I respect your confidence. If I don't—well?"

He grunted undecidedly. I felt I had him at a disadvantage, had caught him in the mood of indiscretion; and to tell the truth I was not curious to learn what might have driven a young medical student out of London. I have an imagination. I shrugged my shoulders and turned away. Over the taffrail leant a silent black figure, watching the stars. It was Montgomery's strange attendant. It looked over its shoulder quickly with my movement, then looked away again.

It may seem a little thing to you, perhaps, but it came like a sudden blow to me. The only light near us was a lantern at the wheel. The creature's face was turned for one brief instant out of the dimness of the stern towards this illumination, and I saw that the eyes that glanced at me shone with a pale-green light. I did not know then that a reddish luminosity, at least, is not uncommon in human eyes. The thing came to me as stark inhumanity. That black figure with its eyes of fire struck down through all my adult thoughts and feelings, and for a moment the forgotten horrors of childhood came back to my mind. Then the effect passed as it had come. An uncouth black figure of a man, a figure of no particular import, hung over the taffrail against the starlight, and I found Montgomery was speaking to me.

"I'm thinking of turning in, then," said he, "if you've had enough of this."

I answered him incongruously. We went below, and he wished me good-night at the door of my cabin.

That night I had some very unpleasant dreams. The waning moon rose late. Its light struck a ghostly white beam across my cabin, and made an ominous shape on the planking by my bunk. Then

the staghounds woke, and began howling and baying; so that I dreamt fitfully, and scarcely slept until the approach of dawn.

CHAPTER V.

The Man Who Had Nowhere to Go

IN the early morning (it was the second morning after my recovery, and I believe the fourth after I was picked up), I awoke through an avenue of tumultuous dreams,—dreams of guns and howling mobs,—and became sensible of a hoarse shouting above me. I rubbed my eyes and lay listening to the noise, doubtful for a little while of my whereabouts. Then came a sudden pattering of bare feet, the sound of heavy objects being thrown about, a violent creaking and the rattling of chains. I heard the swish of the water as the ship was suddenly brought round, and a foamy yellow-green wave flew across the little round window and left it streaming. I jumped into my clothes and went on deck.

As I came up the ladder I saw against the flushed sky—for the sun was just rising—the broad back and red hair of the captain, and over his shoulder the puma spinning from a tackle rigged on to the mizzen spanker-boom.

The poor brute seemed horribly scared, and crouched in the bottom of its little cage.

"Overboard with 'em!" bawled the captain. "Overboard with 'em! We'll have a clean ship soon of the whole bilin' of 'em."

He stood in my way, so that I had perforce to tap his shoulder to come on deck. He came round with a start, and staggered back a few paces to stare at me. It needed no expert eye to tell that the man was still drunk.

"Hullo!" said he, stupidly; and then with a light coming into his eyes, "Why, it's Mister—Mister?"

"Prendick," said I.

"Prendick be damned!" said he. "Shut-up,—that's your name. Mister Shut-up."

It was no good answering the brute; but I certainly did not expect his next move. He held out his hand to the gangway by which Montgomery stood talking to a massive grey-haired man in dirty-blue flannels, who had apparently just come aboard.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up! that way!" roared the captain.

Montgomery and his companion turned as he spoke.

"What do you mean?" I said.

"That way, Mister Blasted Shut-up,—that's what I mean! Overboard, Mister Shut-up,—and sharp! We're cleaning the ship out,—cleaning the whole blessed ship out; and overboard you go!"

I stared at him dumbfounded. Then it occurred to me that it was exactly the thing I wanted. The lost prospect of a journey as sole passenger with this quarrelsome sot was not one to mourn over. I turned towards Montgomery.

"Can't have you," said Montgomery's companion, concisely.

"You can't have me!" said I, aghast. He had the squarest and most resolute face I ever set eyes upon.

"Look here," I began, turning to the captain.

"Overboard!" said the captain. "This ship aint for beasts and cannibals and worse than beasts, any more. Overboard you go, Mister Shut-up. If they can't have you, you goes overboard. But, anyhow, you go—with your friends. I've done with this blessed island for evermore, amen! I've had enough of it.

"But Montgomery," I appealed.

He distorted his lower lip, and nodded his head hopelessly at the grey-haired man beside him, to indicate his powerlessness to help me.

"I'll see to you, presently," said the captain.

Then began a curious three-cornered altercation. Alternately I appealed to one and another of the three men,—first to the grey-haired man to let me land, and then to the drunken captain to keep me aboard. I even bawled entreaties to the sailors. Montgomery said never a word, only shook his head. "You're going overboard, I tell you," was the captain's refrain. "Law be damned! I'm king here." At last I must confess my voice suddenly broke in the middle of a vigorous threat. I felt a gust of hysterical petulance, and went aft and stared dismally at nothing.

Meanwhile the sailors progressed rapidly with the task of unshipping the packages and caged animals. A large launch, with two standing lugs, lay under the lea of the schooner; and into this the strange assortment of goods were swung. I did not then see the hands from the island that were receiving the packages, for the hull of the launch was hidden from me by the side of the schooner. Neither Montgomery nor his companion took the slightest notice of me, but busied themselves in assisting and directing the four or five sailors who were unloading the goods. The captain went forward interfering rather than assisting. I was alternately despairful and desperate. Once or twice as I stood waiting there for things to accomplish themselves, I could not resist an impulse to laugh at my miserable quandry. I felt all the wretcheder for the lack of a breakfast. Hunger and a lack of blood-corpuscles take all the manhood from a man. I perceived pretty clearly that I had not the stamina either to resist what the captain chose to do to expel me, or to force myself upon Montgomery and his companion. So I waited passively upon fate; and the work of transferring Montgomery's possessions to the launch went on as if I did not exist.

Presently that work was finished, and then came a struggle. I was hauled, resisting weakly enough, to the gangway. Even then I noticed the oddness of the brown faces of the men who were with Montgomery in the launch; but the launch was now fully laden, and was shoved off hastily. A broadening gap of green water appeared under me, and I pushed back with all my strength to avoid falling headlong. The hands in the launch shouted derisively, and I heard Montgomery curse at them; and then the captain, the mate, and one of the seamen helping him, ran me aft towards the stern.

The dingey of the "*Lady Vain*" had been towing behind; it was half full of water, had no oars, and was quite unvictualled. I refused to go aboard her, and flung myself full length on the deck. In the end, they swung me into her by a rope (for they had no stern ladder), and then they cut me adrift.

I drifted slowly from the schooner. In a kind of stupor I watched all hands take to the rigging, and slowly but surely she came round to the wind; the sails fluttered, and then bellied out as the wind came into them. I stared at her weather-beaten side heeling steeply towards me; and then she passed out of my range of view.

I did not turn my head to follow her. At first I could scarcely believe what had happened. I crouched in the bottom of the dingey, stunned, and staring blankly at the vacant, oily sea. Then I realized that I was in that little hell of mine again, now half swamped; and looking back over the gunwale, I saw the schooner standing away from me, with the red-haired captain mocking at me over the taffrail, and turning towards the island saw the launch growing smaller as she aproached the beach.

Abruptly the cruelty of this desertion became clear to me. I had no means of reaching the land unless I should chance to drift there. I was still weak, you must remember, from my exposure in the boat; I was empty and very faint, or I should have had more heart. But as it was I suddenly began to sob and weep, as I had never done since I was a little child. The tears ran down my face. In a passion of despair I struck with my fists at the water in the bottom of the boat, and kicked savagely at the gunwale. I prayed aloud for God to let me die.

CHAPTER VI.

The Evil-Looking Boatmen

BUT the islanders, seeing that I was really adrift, took pity on me. I drifted very slowly to the eastward, approaching the island slantingly; and presently I saw, with hysterical relief, the launch come round and return towards me. She was heavily laden, and I could make out as she drew nearer Montgomery's white-haired, broad-shouldered companion sitting cramped up with the dogs and several packing-cases in the stern sheets. This individual stared fixedly at me without moving or speaking. The black-faced cripple was glaring at me as fixedly in the bows near the puma. There were three other men besides,—three strange brutish-looking fellows, at whom the staghounds were snarling savagely. Montgomery, who was steering, brought the boat by me, and rising, caught and fastened my painter to the tiller to tow me, for there was no room aboard.

I had recovered from my hysterical phase by this time, and answered his hail, as he approached, bravely enough. I told him the dingey was nearly swamped, and he reached me a piggin. I was jerked back as the rope tightened between the boats. For some time I was busy baling.

It was not until I had got the water under (for the water in the dingey had been shipped; the boat was perfectly sound) that I had leisure to look at the people in the launch again.

The white-haired man I found was still regarding me steadfastly, but with an expression as I now fancied, of some perplexity. When my eyes met his, he looked down at the staghound that sat between his knees. He was a powerfully-built man, as I have said, with a fine forehead and rather heavy features; but his eyes had that odd drooping of the skin above the lids which often comes with advancing years, and the fall of his heavy mouth at the corners gave him an expression of pugnacious resolution. He talked to Montgomery in a tone too low for me to hear.

From him my eyes travelled to his three men; and a strange crew they were. I saw only their faces, yet there was something in their faces — I knew not what—that gave me a queer spasm of disgust. I looked steadily at them, and the impression did not pass, though I failed to see what had occasioned it. They seemed to me then to be brown men; but their limbs were oddly swathed in some thin, dirty, white stuff down even to the fingers and feet: I have never seen men so wrapped up before, and women so only in the East. They wore turbans too, and thereunder peered out their elfin faces at me,—faces with protruding lower-jaws and bright eyes. They had lank black hair, almost like horsehair, and seemed as they sat to exceed in stature any race of men I have seen. The white-haired man, who I knew was a good six feet in height, sat a head below any one of the three. I found afterwards that really none were taller than myself; but their bodies were abnormally long, and the thigh-part of the leg short and curiously twisted. At any rate, they were an amazingly ugly gang, and over the heads of them under the forward lug peered the black face of the man whose eyes were luminous in the dark. As I stared at them, they met my gaze; and then first one and then another turned away from my direct stare, and looked at me in an odd, furtive manner. It occurred to me that I was perhaps annoying them, and I turned my attention to the island we were approaching.

It was low, and covered with thick vegetation,—chiefly a kind of palm, that was new to me. From one point a thin white thread of vapour rose slantingly to an immense height, and then frayed out like a down feather. We were now within the embrace of a broad bay flanked on either hand by a low promontory. The beach was of dull-grey sand, and sloped steeply up to a ridge, perhaps sixty or seventy feet above the sea-level, and irregularly set with trees and undergrowth. Half way up was a square enclosure of some greyish stone, which I found subsequently was built partly of coral and partly of pumiceous lava. Two thatched roofs peeped from within this enclosure. A man stood awaiting us at the water's edge. I fancied while we were still far off that I saw some other and very grotesque-looking creatures scuttle into the bushes upon the slope; but I saw nothing of these as we drew nearer. This man was of a moderate size, and with a black negroid face. He had a large, almost lipless, mouth, extraordinary lank arms, long thin feet, and bow-legs, and stood with his heavy face thrust forward staring at us. He was dressed like Montgomery and his white-haired companion, in jacket and trousers of blue serge. As we came still nearer, this individual began to run to and fro on the beach, making the most grotesque movements.

At a word of command from Montgomery, the four men in the launch sprang up, and with singularly awkward gestures struck the lugs. Montgomery steered us round and into a narrow little dock excavated in the beach. Then the man on the beach hastened towards us. This dock, as I call it, was

really a mere ditch just long enough at this phase of tide to take the longboat. I heard the bows ground in the sand, staved the dingey off the rudder of the big boat with my piggin, and freeing the painter, landed. The three muffled men, with the clumiest movements, scrambled out upon the sand, and forthwith set to landing the cargo, assisted by the man on the beach. I was struck especially by the curious movements of the legs of the three swathed and bandaged boatmen, — not stiff they were, but distorted in some odd way, almost as if they were jointed in the wrong place. The dogs were still snarling, and strained at their chains after these men, as the white-haired man landed with them. The three big fellows spoke to one another in odd guttural tones, and the man who had waited for us on the beach began chattering to them excitedly—a foreign language, as I fancied—as they laid hands on some bales piled near the stern. Somewhere I had heard such a voice before, and I could not think where. The white-haired man stood, holding in a tumult of six dogs, and bawling orders over their din. Montgomery, having unshipped the rudder, landed likewise, and all set to work at unloading. I was too faint, what with my long fast and the sun beating down on my bare head, to offer any assistance.

Presently the white-haired man seemed to recollect my presence, and came up to me.

"You look," said he, "as though you had scarcely breakfasted." His little eyes were a brilliant black under his heavy brows. "I must apologize for that. Now you are our guest, we must make you comfortable,—though you are uninvited, you know." He looked keenly into my face. "Montgomery says you are an educated man, Mr. Prendick; says you know something of science. May I ask what that signifies?"

I told him I had spent some years at the Royal College of Science, and had done some researches in biology under Huxley. He raised his eyebrows slightly at that.

"That alters the case a little, Mr. Prendick," he said, with a trifle more respect in his manner. "As it happens, we are biologists here. This is a biological station—of a sort." His eye rested on the men in white who were busily hauling the puma, on rollers, towards the walled yard. "I and Montgomery, at least," he added. Then, "When you will be able to get away, I can't say. We're off the track to anywhere. We see a ship once in a twelve-month or so."

He left me abruptly, and went up the beach past this group, and I think entered the enclosure. The other two men were with Montgomery, erecting a pile of smaller packages on a low-wheeled truck. The llama was still on the launch with the rabbit hutches; the staghounds were still lashed to the thwarts. The pile of things completed, all three men laid hold of the truck and began shoving the ton-weight or so upon it after the puma. Presently Montgomery left them, and coming back to me held out his hand.

"I'm glad," said he, "for my own part. That captain was a silly ass. He'd have made things lively for you."

"It was you," said I, "that saved me again."

"That depends. You'll find this island an infernally rum place, I promise you. I'd watch my goings carefully, if I were you. *He*—" He hesitated, and seemed to alter his mind about what was on his lips. "I wish you'd help me with these rabbits," he said.

His procedure with the rabbits was singular. I waded in with him, and helped him lug one of the hutches ashore. No sooner was that done than he opened the door of it, and tilting the thing on one end turned its living contents out on the ground. They fell in a struggling heap one on the top of the other. He clapped his hads, and forthwith they went off with that hopping run of theirs, fifteen or twenty of them I should think, up the beach.

"Increase and multiply, my friends," said Montgomery. "Replenish the island. Hitherto we've had a certain lack of meat here."

As I watched them disappearing, the white-haired man returned with a brandy-flask and some biscuits. "Something to go on with, Prendick," said he, in a far more familiar tone than before. I made no ado, but set to work on the biscuits at once, while the white-haired man helped Montgomery to release about a score more of the rabbits. Three big hutches, however, went up to the house with the puma. The brandy I did not touch, for I have been an abstainer from my birth.

CHAPTER VII.

"The Locked Door"

THE reader will perhaps understand that at first everything was so strange about me, and my position was the outcome of such unexpected adventures, that I had no discernment of the relative strangeness of this or that thing. I followed the llama up the beach, and was overtaken by Montgomery, who asked me not to enter the stone enclosure. I noticed then that the puma in its cage and the pile of packages had been placed outside the entrance to this quadrangle.

I turned and saw that the launch had now been unloaded, run out again, and was being beached, and the white-haired man was walking towards us. He addressed Montgomery.

"And now comes the problem of this uninvited guest. What are we to do with him?"

"He knows something of science," said Montgomery.

"I'm itching to get to work again—with this new stuff," said the white-haired man, nodding towards the enclosure. His eyes grew brighter.

"I daresay you are," said Montgomery, in anything but a cordial tone.

"We can't send him over there, and we can't spare the time to build him a new shanty; and we certainly can't take him into our confidence just yet."

"I'm in your hands," said I. I had no idea of what he meant by "over there."

"I've been thinking of the same things," Montgomery answered. "There's my room with the outer door—"

"That's it," said the elder man, promptly, looking at Montgomery; and all three of us went towards the enclosure. "I'm sorry to make a mystery, Mr. Prendick; but you'll remember you're uninvited. Our little establishment here contains

a secret or so, is a kind of Blue-Beard's chamber, in fact. Nothing very dreadful, really, to a sane man; but just now, as we don't know you—"

"Decidedly," said I, "I should be a fool to take offence at any want of confidence."

He twisted his heavy mouth into a faint smile,—he was one of those saturnine people who smile with the corners of the mouth down,—and bowed his acknowledgment of my complaisance. The main entrance to the enclosure we passed; it was a heavy wooden gate, framed in iron and locked, with the cargo of the launch piled outside it, and at the corner we came to a small doorway I had not previously observed. The white-haired man produced a bundle of keys from the pocket of his greasy blue jacket, opened this door, and entered. His keys, and the elaborate locking-up of the place even while it was still under his eye, struck me as peculiar. I followed him, and found myself in a small apartment, plainly but not uncomfortably furnished, and with its inner door, which was slightly ajar, opening into a paved courtyard. This inner door Montgomery at once closed. A hammock was slung across the darker corner of the room, and a small unglazed window defended by an iron bar looked out towards the sea.

This the white-haired man told me was to be my apartment; and the inner door, which "for fear of accidents," he said, he would lock on the other side, was my limit inward. He called my attention to a convenient deck-chair before the window, and to an array of old books,—chiefly, I found, surgical works and editions of the Latin and Greek classics (languages I cannot read with any comfort), on a shelf near the hammock. He left the room by the outer door, as if to avoid opening the inner one again.

"We usually have our meals in here," said Montgomery, and then, as if in doubt, went out after the other. "Moreau!" I heard him call, and for the moment I do not think I noticed. Then as I handled the books on the shelf it came up in consciousness: Where had I heard the name of Moreau before? I sat down before the window, took out the biscuits that still remained to me, and ate them with an excellent appetite. Moreau!

Through the window I saw one of those unaccountable men in white, lugging a packing-case along the beach. Presently the window-frame hid him. Then I heard a key inserted and turned in the lock behind me. After a little while I heard through the locked door the noise of the staghounds, that had now been brought up from the beach. They were not barking, but sniffing and growling in a curious fashion. I could hear the rapid patter of their feet, and Montgomery's voice soothing them.

I was very much impressed by the elaborate secrecy of these two men regarding the contents of the place, and for some time I was thinking of that and of the unaccountable familiarity of the name of Moreau; but so odd is the human memory that I could not then recall that well-known name in its proper connection. From that my thoughts went to the indefinable queerness of the deformed man on the beach. I never saw such a gait, such odd motions as he pulled at the box. I recalled that none of these men had spoken to me, though most of them I had found looking at me at one time or another in a peculiarly furtive manner, quite unlike the frank stare of your unsophisticated savage. Indeed, they had all seemed remarkably taciturn, and when they did speak, endowed with very uncanny voices. What was wrong with them? Then I recalled the eyes of Montgomery's ungainly attendant.

Just as I was thinking of him he came in. He was now dressed in white, and carried a little tray with some coffee and boiled vegetables thereon. I could hardly repress a shuddering recoil as he came, bending amiably, and placed the tray before me on the table. Then astonishment paralyzed me. Under his stringy black hair I saw his ear; it jumped upon me suddenly close to my face. The man had pointed ears, covered with a fine brown fur!

"Your breakfast, sair," he said.

I stared at his face without attempting to answer him. He turned and went towards the door, regarding me oddly over his shoulder. I followed him out with my eyes; and as I did so, by some odd trick of unconscious cerebration, there came surging into my head the phrase, "The Moreau Hollows"—was it? "The Moreau—" Ah! It sent my memory back ten years. "The Moreau Horrors!" The phrase drifted loose in my mind for a moment, and then I saw it in red lettering on a little buff-coloured pamphlet, to read which made one shiver and creep. Then I remembered distinctly all about it. That long-forgotten pamphlet came back with startling vividness to my mind. I had been a mere lad then, and Moreau was, I suppose, about fifty,—a prominent and masterful physiologist, well-known in scientific circles for his extraordinary imagination and his brutal directness in discusson.

Was this the same Moreau? He had published some very astonishing facts in connection with the transfusion of blood, and in addition was known to be doing valuable work on morbid growths. Then suddenly his career was closed. He had to leave England. A journalist obtained access to his laboratory in the capacity of laboratory-assistant, with the deliberate intention of making sensational exposures; and by the help of a shocking accident (if it was an accident), his gruesome pamphlet became notorious. On the day of its publication a wretched dog, flayed and otherwise mutilated, escaped from Moreau's house. It was in the silly season, and a prominent editor, a cousin of the temporary laboratory-assistant, appealed to the conscience of the nation. It was not the first time that conscience has turned against the methods of research. The doctor was simply howled out of the country. It may be that he deserved to be; but I still think that the tepid support of his fellow-investigators and his desertion by the great body of scientific workers was a shameful thing. Yet some of his experiments, by the journalist's account, were wantonly cruel. He might perhaps have purchased his social peace by abandoning his investigations; but he apparently preferred the latter, as most men would who have once fallen under the overmastering spell of research. He was unmarried, and had indeed nothing but his own interest to consider.

I felt convinced that this must be the same man. Everything pointed to it. It dawned upon me to what end the puma and the other animals—which had now been brought with other luggage into the enclosure behind the house—were destined; and a

curious faint odour, the halitus of something familiar, an odour that had been in the background of my consciousness hitherto, suddenly came forward into the forefront of my thoughts. It was the antiseptic odour of the dissecting-room. I heard the puma growling through the wall, and one of the dogs yelped as though it had been struck.

Yet surely, and especially to another scientific man, there was nothing so horrible in vivisection as to account for this secrecy; and by some odd leap in my thoughts the pointed ears and luminous eyes of Montgomery's attendant came back again before me with the sharpest definition. I stared before me out at the green sea, frothing under a freshening breeze, and let these and other strange memories of the last few days chase one another through my mind.

What could it all mean? A locked enclosure on a lonely island, a notorious vivisector, and these crippled and distorted men?

CHAPTER VIII.

The Crying of the Puma

MONTGOMERY interrupted my tangle of mystification and suspicion about one o'clock, and his grotesque attendant followed him with a tray bearing bread, some herbs and other eatables, a flask of whiskey, a jug of water, and three glasses and knives. I glanced askance at this strange creature, and found him watching me with his queer, restless eyes. Montgomery said he would lunch with me, but that Moreau was to preoccupied with some work to come.

"Moreau!" said I. "I know that name."

"The devil you do!" said he. "What an ass I was to mention it to you! I might have thought. Anyhow, it will give you an inkling of our—mysteries. Whiskey?"

"No, thanks; I'm an abstainer."

"I wish I'd been. But it's no use locking the door after the steed is stolen. It was that infernal stuff which led to my coming here,—that, and a foggy night. I thought myself in luck at the time, when Moreau offered to get me off. It's queer—"

"Montgomery," said I, suddenly, as the outer door closed, "why has your man pointed ears?"

"Damn!" he said, over his first mouthful of food. He stared at me for a moment, and then repeated, "Pointed ears?"

"Little points to them," said I, as calmly as possible, with a catch in my breath; "and a fine black fur at the edges?"

He helped himself to whiskey and water with great deliberation. "I was under the impression—that his hair covered his ears."

"I saw them as he stooped by me to put that coffee you sent to me on the table. And his eyes shine in the dark."

By this time Montgomery had recovered from the surprise of my question. "I always thought," he said deliberately, with a certain accentuation of his flavouring of lisp, "that there *was* something the matter with his ears, from the way he covered them. What were they like?"

I was persuaded from his manner that this ignorance was a pretense. Still, I could hardly tell the man that I thought him a liar. "Pointed," I said; "rather small and furry,—distinctly furry. But the whole man is one of the strangest beings I ever set eyes on."

A sharp, hoarse cry of animal pain came from the enclosure behind us. Its depth and volume testified to the puma. I saw Montgomery wince.

"Yes?" he said.

"Where did you pick up the creature?"

"San Francisco. He's an ugly brute, I admit. Half-witted, you know. Can't remember where he came from. But I'm used to him, you know. We both are. How does he strike you?"

"He's unnatural," I said. "There's something about him—don't think me fanciful, but it gives me a nasty little sensation, a tightening of my muscles, when he comes near me. It's a touch—of the diabolical, in fact."

Montgomery had stopped eating while I told him this. "Rum!" he said. "*I* can't see it." He resumed his meal. "I had no idea of it," he said, and masticated. "The crew of the schooner must have felt it the same. Made a dead set at the poor devil. You saw the captain?"

Suddenly the puma howled again, this time more painfully. Montgomery swore under his breath. I had half a mind to attack him about the men on the beach. Then the poor brute within gave vent to a series of short, sharp cries.

"Your men on the beach," said I; "what race are they?"

"Excellent fellows, aren't they?" said he, absent-mindedly, knitting his brows as the animal yelled out sharply.

I said no more. There was another outcry worse than the former. He looked at me with his dull grey eyes, and then took some more whiskey. He tried to draw me into a discussion about alcohol, professing to have saved my life with it. He seemed anxious to lay stress on the fact that I owed my life to him. I answered him distractedly.

Presently our meal came to an end; the misshapen monster with the pointed ears cleared the remains away, and Montgomery left me alone in the room again. All the time he had been in a state of ill-concealed irritation at the noise of the vivisected puma. He had spoken of his odd want of nerve, and left me to the obvious application.

I found myself that the cries were singularly irritating, and they grew in depth and intensity as the afternoon wore on. They were painful at first, but their constant resurgence at last altogether upset my balance. I flung aside a crib of Horace I had been reading, and began to clench my fists, to bite my lips, and to pace the room. Presently I got to stopping my ears with my fingers.

The emotional appeal of those yells grew upon me steadily, grew at last to such an exquisite expression of suffering that I could stand it in that confined room no longer. I stepped out of the door into the slumberous heat of the late afternoon, and walking past the main entrance—locked again, I noticed—turned the corner of the wall.

The crying sounded even louder out of doors. It was as if all the pain in the world had found a voice. Yet had I known such pain was in the next room, and had it been dumb, I believe — I have thought since—I could have stood it well enough.

It is when suffering finds a voice and sets our nerves quivering that this pity comes troubling us. But in spite of the brilliant sunlight and the green fans of the trees waving in the soothing sea-breeze, the world was a confusion, blurred with drifting black and red phantasms, until I was out of earshot of the house in the chequered wall.

CHAPTER IX.

The Thing in the Forest

I STRODE through the undergrowth that clothed the ridge behind the house, scarcely heeding whither I went; passed on through the shadow of a thick cluster of straight-stemmed trees beyond it, and so presently found myself some way on the other side of the ridge, and descending towards a streamlet that ran through a narrow valley. I paused and listened. The distance I had come, or the intervening masses of thicket, deadened any sound that might be coming from the enclosure. The air was still. Then with a rustle a rabbit emerged, and went scampering up the slope before me. I hesitated, and sat down in the edge of the shade.

The place was a pleasant one. The rivulet was hidden by the luxuriant vegetation of the banks save at one point, where I caught a triangular patch of its glittering water. On the farther side I saw through a bluish haze a tangle of trees and creepers, and above these again the luminous blue of the sky. Here and there a splash of white or crimson marked the blooming of some trailing epiphyte. I let my eyes wander over this scene for a while, and then began to turn over in my mind again the strange peculiarities of Montgomery's man. But it was too hot to think elaborately, and presently I fell into a tranquil state midway between dozing and waking.

From this I was aroused, after I know not how long, by a rustling amidst the greenery on the other side of the stream. For a moment I could see nothing but the waving summits of the ferns and reeds. Then suddenly upon the bank of the stream appeared Something—at first I could not distinguish what it was. It bowed its round head to the water, and began to drink. Then I saw it was a man, going on all-fours like a beast. He was clothed in bluish cloth, and was of a copper-coloured hue, with black hair. It seemed that grotesque ugliness was an invariable character of these islanders. I could hear the suck of the water at his lips as he drank.

I leant forward to see him better, and a piece of lava, detached by my hand, went pattering down the slope. He looked up guiltily, and his eyes met mine. Forthwith he scrambled to his feet, and stood wiping his clumsy hand across his mouth and regarding me. His legs were scarcely half the length of his body. So, staring one another out of countenance, we remained for perhaps the space of a minute. Then, stopping to look back once or twice, he slunk off among the bushes to the right of me, and I heard the swish of the fronds grow faint in the distance and die away. Long after he had disappeared, I remained sitting up staring in the direction of his retreat. My drowsy tranquility had gone.

I was startled by a noise behind me, and turning suddenly saw the flapping white tail of a rabbit vanishing up the slope. I jumped to my feet. The apparition of this grotesque, half-bestial creature had suddenly populated the stillness of the afternoon for me. I looked around me rather nervously, and regretted that I was unarmed. Then I thought that the man I had just seen had been clothed in bluish cloth, had not been naked as a savage would have been; and I tried to persuade myself from that fact that he was after all probably a peaceful character, that the dull ferocity of his countenance belied him.

Yet I was greatly disturbed at the apparition. I walked to the left along the slope, turning my head about, and peering this way and that among the straight stems of the trees. Why should a man go on all-fours and drink with his lips? Presently I heard an animal wailing again, and taking it to be the puma, I turned about and walked in a direction diametrically opposite to the sound. This led me down to the stream, across which I stepped and pushed my way up through the undergrowth beyond.

I was startled by a great patch of vivid scarlet on the ground, and going up to it found it to be a peculiar fungus, branched and corrugated like a foliaceous lichen, but deliquescing into slime at the touch; and then in the shadow of some luxuriant ferns I came upon an unpleasant thing,—the dead body of a rabbit covered with shining flies, but still warm and with the head torn off. I stopped aghast at the sight of the scattered blood. Here at least was one visitor to the island disposed of! There were no traces of other violence about it. It looked as though it had been suddenly snatched up and killed; and as I stared at the little furry body came the difficulty of how the thing had been done. The vague dread that had been in my mind since I had seen the inhuman face of the man at the stream grew distincter as I stood there. I began to realise the hardihood of my expedition among these unknown people. The thicket about me became altered to my imagination. Every shadow became something more than a shadow,—became an ambush; every rustle became a threat. Invisible things seemed watching me. I resolved to go back to the enclosure on the beach. I suddenly turned away and thrust myself violently, possibly even frantically, through the bushes, anxious to get a clear space about me again.

I stopped just in time to prevent myself emerging upon an open space. It was a kind of glade in the forest, made by a fall; seedlings were already starting up to struggle for the vacant space; and beyond, the dense growth of stems and twining vines and splashes of fungus and flowers closed in again. Before me, squatting together upon the fungoid ruins of a huge fallen tree and still unaware of my approach, were three grotesque human figures. One was evidently a female; the other two were men. They were naked, save for swathings of scarlet cloth about the middle; and their skins were of a dull pinkish drab colour, such as I had seen in no savages before. They had fat, heavy, chinless faces, retreating foreheads, and a scant bristly hair upon their heads. I never saw such bestial-looking creatures.

They were talking, or at least one of the men was talking to the other two, and all three had been

too closely interested to heed the rustling of my approach. They swayed their heads and shoulders from side to side. The speaker's words came thick and sloppy, and though I could hear them distinctly I could not distinguish what he said. He seemed to me to be reciting some complicated gibberish. Presently his articulation became shriller, and spreading his hands he rose to his feet. At that the others began to gibber in unison, also rising to their feet, spreading their hands and swaying their bodies in rhythm with their chant. I noticed then the abnormal shortness of their legs, and their lank, clumsy feet. All three began slowly to circle round, raising and stamping their feet and waving their arms; a kind of tune crept into their rhythmic recitation, and a refrain,—"Aloola," or "Balloola," it sounded like. Their eyes began to sparkle, and their ugly faces to brighten, with an expression of strange pleasure. Saliva dripped from their lipless mouths.

Suddenly, as I watched their grotesque and unaccountable gestures, I perceived clearly for the first time what it was that had offended me, what had given me the two inconsistent and conflicting impressions of utter strangeness and yet of the strangest familiarity. The three creatures engaged in this mysterious rite were human in shape, and yet human beings with the strangest air about them of some familiar animal. Each of these creatures, despite its human form, its rag of clothing, and the rough humanity of its bodily form, had woven into it—into its movements, into the expression of its countenance, into its whole presence —some now irresistible suggestion of a hog, a swinish taint, the unmistakable mark of the beast.

I stood overcome by this amazing realisation; and then the most horrible questionings came rushing into my mind. They began leaping in the air, first one and then the other, whooping and grunting. Then one slipped, and for a moment was on all-fours,—to recover, indeed, forthwith. But that transitory gleam of the true animalism of these monsters was enough.

I turned as noiselessly as possible, and becoming every now and then rigid with the fear of being discovered, as a branch cracked or a leaf rustled, I pushed back into the bushes. It was long before I grew bolder, and dared to move freely. My only idea for the moment was to get away from these foul beings, and I scarcely noticed that I had emerged upon a faint pathway amidst the trees. Then suddenly traversing a little glade, I saw with an unpleasant start two clumsy legs among the trees, walking with noiseless footsteps parallel with my course, and perhaps thirty yards away from me. The head and upper part of the body were hidden by a tangle of creeper. I stopped abruptly, hoping the creature did not see me. The feet stopped as I did. So nervous was I that I controlled an impulse to headlong flight with the utmost difficulty. Then looking hard, I distinguished through the interlacing network the head and body of the brute I had seen drinking. He moved his head. There was an emerald flash in his eyes as he glanced at me from the shadow of the trees, a half-luminous colour that vanished as he turned his head again. He was motionless for a moment, and then with a noiseless tread began running through the green confusion. In another moment he had vanished behind some bushes. I could not see him, but I felt that he had stopped and was watching me again.

What on earth was he,—man or beast? What did he want with me? I had no weapon, not even a stick. Fight would be madness. At any rate the Thing, whatever it was, lacked the courage to attack me. Setting my teeth hard, I walked straight towards him. I was anxious not to show the fear that seemed chilling my backbone. I pushed through a tangle of tall white-flowered bushes, and saw him twenty paces beyond, looking over his shoulder at me and hesitating. I advanced a step or two, looking steadfastly into his eyes.

"Who are you?" said I.

He tried to meet my gaze. *"No!"* he said suddenly, and turning went bounding away from me through the undergrowth. Then he turned and stared at me again. His eyes shone brightly out of the dusk under the trees.

My heart was in my mouth; but I felt my only chance was bluff, and walked steadily towards him. He turned again and vanished into the dusk. Once more I thought I caught the glint of his eyes, and that was all.

For the first time I realised how the lateness of the hour might affect me. The sun had set some minutes since, the swift dusk of the tropics was already fading out of the eastern sky, and a pioneer moth fluttered silently by my head. Unless I would spend the night among the unknown dangers of the mysterious forest, I must hasten back to the enclosure. The thought of a return to that pain-haunted refuge was extremely disagreeable, but still more so was the idea of being overtaken in the open by darkness and all that darkness might conceal. I gave one more look into the blue shadows that had swallowed up this odd creature, and then retraced my way down the slope towards the stream, going as I judged in the direction from which I had come.

I walked eagerly, my mind confused with many things, and presently found myself in a level place among scattered trees. The colourless clearness that comes after the sunset flush was darkling; the blue sky above grew momentarily deeper, and the little stars one by one pierced the attenuated light; the interspaces of the trees, the gaps in the further vegetation, that had been hazy blue in the daylight, grew black and mysterious. I pushed on. The colour vanished from the world. The tree-tops rose against the luminous blue sky in inky silhouette, and all below that outline melted into one formless blackness. Presently the trees grew thinner, and the shrubby undergrowth more abundant. Then there was a desolate space covered with a white sand, and then another expanse of tangled bushes. I did not remember crossing the sand-opening before. I began to be tormented by a faint rustling upon my right hand. I thought at first it was fancy, for whenever I stopped there was silence, save for the evening breeze in the tree-tops. Then when I turned to hurry on again there was an echo to my footsteps.

I turned away from the thickets, keeping to the more open ground, and endeavouring by sudden turns now and then to surprise something in the act of creeping upon me. I saw nothing, and nevertheless my sense of another presence grew steadily.

I increased my pace, and after some time came to a slight ridge, crossed it, and turned sharply, regarding it steadfastly from the further side. It came out black and clear-cut against the darkling sky; and presently a shapeless lump heaved up momentarily against the sky-line and vanished again. I felt assured now that my tawny-faced antagonist was stalking me once more; and coupled with that was another unpleasant realisation, that I had lost my way.

For a time I hurried on hopelessly perplexed, and pursued by that stealthy approach. Whatever it was, the Thing either lacked the courage to attack me, or it was waiting to take me at some disadvantage. I kept studiously to the open. At times I would turn and listen; and presently I had half persuaded myself that my pursuer had abandoned the chase, or was a mere creation of my disordered imagination. Then I heard the sound of the sea. I quickened my footsteps almost into a run, and immediately there was a stumble in my rear.

I turned suddenly, and stared at the uncertain trees behind me. One black shadow seemed to leap into another. I listened, rigid, and heard nothing but the creep of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were unstrung, and that my imagination was tricking me, and turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea again,

In a minute or so the trees grew thinner, and I emerged upon a bare, low headland running out into the sombre water. The night was calm and clear, and the reflection of the growing multitude of the stars shivered in the tranquil heaving of the sea. Some way out, the wash upon an irregular band of reef shone with a pallid light of its own. Westward I saw the zodiacal light mingling with the yellow brilliance of the evening star. The coast fell away from me to the east, and westward it was hidden by the shoulder of the cape. Then I recalled the fact that Moreau's beach lay to the west.

A twig snapped behind me, and there was a rustle. I turned, and stood facing the dark trees. I could see nothing—or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its ominous quality, its peculiar suggestion of alert watchfulness. So I stood for perhaps a minute, and then, with an eye to the trees still, turned westward to cross the headland; and as I moved, one among the lurking shadows moved to follow me.

My heart beat quickly. Presently the broad sweep of a bay to the westward became visible, and I halted again. The noiseless shadow halted a dozen yards from me. A little point of light shone on the further bend of the curve, and the grey sweep of the sandy beach lay faint under the starlight. Perhaps two miles away was that little point of light. To get to the beach I should have to go through the trees where the shadows lurked, and down a bushy slope.

I could see the Thing rather more distinctly now. It was no animal, for it stood erect. At that I opened my mouth to speak, and found a hoarse phlegm choked my voice. I tried again, and shouted, "Who is there?" There was no answer. I advanced a step. The Thing did not move, only gathered itself together. My foot struck a stone. That gave me an idea. Without taking my eyes off the black form before me, I stooped and picked up this lump of rock; but at my motion the Thing turned abruptly as a dog might have done, and slunk obliquely into the further darkness. Then I recalled a schoolboy expedient against big dogs, and twisted the rock into my handkerchief, and gave this a turn round my wrist. I heard a movement further off among the shadows, as if the Thing was in retreat. Then suddenly my tense excitement gave way; I broke into a profuse perspiration and fell a-trembling, with my adversary routed and this weapon in my hand.

It was some time before I could summon resolution to go down through the trees and bushes upon the flank of the headland to the beach. At last I did it at a run; and as I emerged from the thicket upon the sand, I heard some other body come crashing after me. At that I completely lost my head with fear, and began running along the sand. Forthwith there came the swift patter of soft feet in pursuit. I gave a wild cry, and redoubled my pace. Some dim, black things about three or four times the size of rabbits went running or hopping up from the beach towards the bushes as I passed.

So long as I live, I shall remember the terror of that chase. I ran near the water's edge, and heard every now and then the splash of the feet that gained upon me. Far away, hopelessly far, was the yellow light. All the night about us was black and still. Splash, splash, came the pursuing feet, nearer and nearer. I felt my breath going, for I was quite out of training; it whooped as I drew it, and I felt a pain like a knife at my side. I perceived the Thing would come up with me long before I reached the enclosure, and, desperate and sobbing for my breath, I wheeled round upon it and struck at it as it came up to me,—struck with all my strength. The stone came out of the sling of the handkerchief as I did so. As I turned, the Thing, which had been running on all-fours, rose to its feet, and the missile fell fair on its left temple. The skull rang loud, and the animal-man blundered into me, thrust me back with its hands, and went staggering past me to fall headlong upon the sand with its face in the water; and there it lay still.

I could not bring myself to approach the black heap. I left it there, with the water rippling round it, under the still stars, and giving it a wide berth pursued my way towards the yellow glow of the house; and presently, with a positive effect of relief, came the pitiful moaning of the puma, the sound that had originally driven me out to explore this mysterious island. At that, though I was faint and horribly fatigued, I gathered together all my strength, and began running again towards the light. I thought I heard a voice calling me.

CHAPTER X.

The Crying of the Man

AS I drew near the house I saw that the light shone from the open door of my room; and then I heard coming from out of the darkness at the side of that orange oblong of light, the voice of Montgomery shouting, "Prendick!" I continued running. Presently I heard him again. I

replied by a feeble "Hullo!" and in another moment had staggered up to him.

"Where have you been?" said he, holding me at arm's length, so that the light from the door fell on my face, "We have both been so busy that we forgot you until about half an hour ago." He led me into the room and set me down in the deck chair. For awhile I was blinded by the light. "We did not think you would start to explore this island of ours with telling us," he said; and then, "I was afraid— But — what — Hullo!"

My last remaining strength slipped from me, and my head fell forward on my chest. I think he found a certain satisfaction in giving me brandy.

"For God's sake," said I, "fasten that door."

"You've been meeting some of our curiosities, eh?" said he.

He locked the door and turned to me again. He asked me no questions, but gave me some more brandy and water and pressed me to eat. I was in a state of collapse. He said something vague about his forgetting to warn me, and asked me briefly when I left the house and what I had seen.

I answered him as briefly, in fragmentary sentences. "Tell me what it all means," said I, in a state bordering on hysterics.

"It's nothing so very dreadful," said he. "But I think you have had about enough for one day." The puma suddenly gave a sharp yell of pain. At that he swore under his breath. "I'm damned," said he, "if this place is not as bad as Gower street, with its cats."

"Montgomery," said I, "what was that thing that came after me? Was it a beast or was it a man?"

"If you don't sleep to-night," he said, "you'll be off your head to-morrow."

I stood up in front of him. "What was that thing that came after me?" I asked.

He looked me squarely in the eyes, and twisted his mouth askew. His eyes, which had seemed animated a minute before, went dull. "From your account," said he, "I'm thinking it was a bogle."

I felt a gust of intense irritation, which passed as quickly as it came. I flung myself into the chair again, and pressed my hands on my forehead. The puma began once more.

Montgomery came round behind me and put his hand on my shoulder. "Look here, Prendick," he said, "I had no business to let you drift out into this silly island of ours. But it's not so bad as you feel, man. Your nerves are worked to rags. Let me give you something that will make you sleep. *That*—will keep on for hours yet. You must simply get to sleep, or I won't answer for it."

I did not reply. I bowed forward, and covered my face with my hands. Presently he returned with a small measure containing a dark liquid. This he gave me. I took it unresistingly, and he helped me into the hammock.

When I awoke, it was broad day. For a little while I lay flat, staring at the roof above me. The rafters, I observed, were made out of the timbers of a ship. Then I turned my head, and saw a meal prepared for me on the table. I perceived that I was hungry, and prepared to clamber out of the hammock, which, very politely anticipating my intention, twisted round and deposited me upon all-fours on the floor.

I got up and sat down before the food. I had a heavy feeling in my head, and only the vaguest memory at first of the things that had happened over night. The morning breeze blew very pleasantly through the unglazed window, and that and the food contributed to the sense of animal comfort which I experienced. Presently the door behind me —the door inward towards the yard of the enclosure —opened. I turned and saw Montgomery's face.

"All right," said he. "I'm frightfully busy." And he shut the door.

Afterwards I discovered that he forgot to relock it. Then I recalled the expression of his face the previous night, and with that the memory of all I had experienced reconstructed itself before me. Even as that fear came back to me came a cry from within; but this time it was not the cry of a puma. I put down the mouthful that hesitated upon my lips, and listened. Silence, save for the whisper of the morning breeze. I began to think my ears had deceived me.

After a long pause I resumed my meal, but with my ears still vigilant. Presently I heard something else, very faint and low. I sat as if frozen in my attitude. Though it was faint and low, it moved me more profoundly than all that I had hitherto heard of the abominations behind the wall. There was no mistake this time in the quality of the dim, broken sounds; no doubt at all of their source. For it was groaning, broken by sobs and gasps of anguish. It was no brute this time; it was a human being in torment!

As I realised this I rose, and in three steps had crossed the rooms, seized the handle of the door into the yard, and flung it open before me.

"Prendick, man! Stop!" cried Montgomery, intervening.

A startled deerhound yelped and snarled. There was blood, I saw, in the sink,—brown, and some scarlet,—and I smelt the peculiar smell of carbolic acid. Then through an open doorway beyond, in the dim light of the shadow, I saw something bound painfully upon a framework, scarred, red, and bandaged; and then blotting this out appeared the face of old Moreau, white and terrible. In a moment he had gripped me by the shoulder with a hand that was smeared red, had twisted me off my feet, and flung me headlong back into my own room. He lifted me as though I was a little child. I fell at full length upon the floor, and the door slammed and shut out the passionate intensity of his face. Then I heard the key turn in the lock, and Montgomery's voice in expostulation.

"Ruin the work of a lifetime," I heard Moreau say.

"He does not understand," said Montgomery, and other things that were inaudible.

"I can't spare the time yet," said Moreau.

The rest I did not hear. I picked myself up and stood trembling, my mind a chaos of the most horrible misgivings. Could it be possible, I thought, that such a thing as the vivisection of men was carried on here? The question shot like lightning across a tumultuous sky; and suddenly the clouded horror of my mind condensed into a vivid realisation of my own danger.

CHAPTER XI

The Hunting of the Man

IT came before my mind with an unreasonable hope of escape that the outer door of my room was still open to me. I was convinced now, absolutely assured, that Moreau had been vivisecting a human being. All the time since I had heard his name, I had been trying to link in my mind in some way the grotesque animalism of the islanders with his abominations; and now I thought I saw it all. The memory of his work on the transfusion of blood recurred to me. These creatures I had seen were the victims of some hideous experiment. These sickening scoundrels had merely intended to keep me back, to fool me with their display of confidence, and presently to fall upon me with a fate more horrible than death,—with torture; and after torture the most hideous degradation it was possible to conceive,—to send me off a lost soul, a beast, to the rest of their Comus rout.

I looked round for some weapon. Nothing. Then with an inspiration I turned over the deck chair, put my foot on the side of it, and tore away the side rail. It happened that a nail came away with the wood, and projecting, gave a touch of danger to an otherwise petty weapon. I heard a step outside, and incontinently flung open the door and found Montgomery within a yard of it. He meant to lock the outer door! I raised this nailed stick of mine and cut at his face; but he sprang back. I hesitated a moment, then turned and fled round the corner of the house. "Prendick, man!" I heard his astonished cry, "don't be a silly ass, man!"

Another minute, thought I, and he would have had me locked in, and as ready as a hospital rabbit for my fate. He emerged behind the corner, for I heard him shout, "Prendick!" Then he began to run after me, shouting things as he ran. This time running blindly, I went northeastward in a direction at right angles to my previous expedition. Once, as I went running headlong up the beach, I glanced over my shoulder and saw his attendant with him. I ran furiously up the slope, over it, then turning eastward along a rocky valley fringed on either side with jungle I ran for perhaps a mile altogether, my chest straining, my heart beating in my ears; and then hearing nothing of Montgomery or his man, and feeling upon the verge of exhaustion, I doubled sharply back towards the beach as I judged, and lay down in the shelter of a canebrake. There I remained for a long time, too fearful to move, and indeed too fearful even to plan a course of action. The wild scene about me lay sleeping silently under the sun, and the only sound near me was the thin hum of some small gnats that had discovered me. Presently I became aware of a drowsy breathing sound, the soughing of the sea upon the beach.

After about an hour I heard Montgomery shouting my name, far away to the north. That set me thinking of my plan of action. As I interpreted it then, this island was inhabited only by these two vivisectors and their animalised victims. Some of these no doubt they could press into their service against me if need arose. I knew both Moreau and Montgomery carried revolvers; and, save for a feeble bar of deal spiked with a small nail, the merest mockery of a mace, I was unarmed.

So I lay still, until I began to think of food and drink; and at that thought the real hopelessness of my position came home to me. I knew no way of getting anything to eat. I was too ignorant of botany to discover any resort of root or fruit that might lie about me; I had no means of trapping the few rabbits upon the island. It grew blanker the more I turned the prospect over. At last in the desperation of my position, my mind turned to the animal men I had encountered. I tried to find some hope in what I remembered of them. In turn I recalled each one I had seen, and tried to draw some augury of assistance from my memory.

Then suddenly I heard a stag-hound bay, and at that realised a new danger. I took little time to think, or they would have caught me then, but snatching up my nailed stick, rushed headlong from my hiding-place towards the sound of the sea. I remember a growth of thorny plants, with spines that stabbed like pen-knives. I emerged bleeding and with torn clothes upon the lip of a long creek opening northward. I went straight into the water without a minute's hesitation, wading up the creek, and presently finding myself knee-deep in a little stream. I scrambled out at last on the westward bank, and with my heart beating loudly in my ears, crept into a tangle of ferns to await the issue. I heard the dog (there was only one) draw nearer, and yelp when it came to the thorns. Then I heard no more, and presently began to think I had escaped.

The minutes passed; the silence lengthened out, and at last after an hour of security my courage began to return to me. By this time I was no longer very much terrified or very miserable. I had, as it were, passed the limit of terror and despair. I felt now that my life was practcically lost, and that persuasion made me capable of daring anything. I had even a certain wish to encounter Moreau face to face; and as I had waded into the water, I remembered that if I were too hard pressed at least one path of escape from torment still lay open to me,—they could not very well prevent my drowning myself. I had half a mind to drown myself then; but an odd wish to see the whole adventure out, a queer, impersonal, spectacular interest in myself, restrained me. I stretched my limbs, sore and painful from the pricks of the spiny plants, and stared around me at the trees; and, so suddenly that it seemed to jump out of the green tracery about it, my eyes lit upon a black face watching me. I saw that it was the simian creature who had met the launch upon the beach. He was clinging to the oblique stem of a palm-tree. I gripped my stick, and stood up facing him. He began chattering. "You, you, you," was all I could distinguish at first. Suddenly he dropped from the tree, and in another moment was holding the fronds apart and staring curiously at me.

I did not feel the same repugnance towards this creature which I had experienced in my encounters with the other Beast Men. "You, he said, "in the boat." He was a man, then,—at least as much of a man as Montgomery's attendant,—for he could talk.

"Yes," I said, "I came in the boat. From the ship."

"Oh!" he said, and his bright, restless eyes travelled over me, to my hands, to the stick I carried, to my feet, to the tattered places in my coat, and the cuts and scratches I had received from the thorns. He seemed puzzled at something. His eyes came back to my hands. He held his own hand out and counted his digits slowly, "One two, three, four, five—eigh?"

I did not grasp his meaning then; afterwards I was to find that a great proportion of these Beast People had malformed hands, lacking sometimes even three digits. But guessing this was in some way a greeting, I did the same thing by way of reply. He grinned with immense satisfaction. Then his swift roving glance went round again; he made a swift movement—and vanished. The fern fronds he had stood between came swishing together.

I pushed out of the brake after him, and was astonished to find him swinging cheerfully by one lank arm from a rope of creeper that looped down from the foliage overhead. His back was to me.

"Hullo!" said I.

He came down with a twisting jump, and stood facing me.

"I say," said I, "where can I get something to eat?"

"Eat!" he said. "Eat Man's food, now." And his eye went back to the swing of ropes. "At the huts."

"But where are the huts?"

"Oh!"

"I'm new, you know."

At that he swung round, and set off at a quick walk. All his motions were curiously rapid. "Come along," said he.

I went with him to see the adventure out. I guessed the huts were some rough shelter where he and some more of these Beast People lived. I might perhaps find them friendly, find some handle in their minds to take hold of. I did not know how far they had forgotten their human heritage.

My ape-like companion trotted along by my side, with his hands hanging down and his jaw thrust forward. I wondered what memory he might have in him. "How long have you been on this island?" said I.

"How long?" he asked; and after having the question repeated, he held up three fingers.

The creature was little better than an idiot. I tried to make out what he meant by that, and it seems I bored him. After another question or two he suddenly left my side and went leaping at some fruit that hung from a tree. He pulled down a handful of prickly husks and went on eating the contents. I noted this with satisfaction, for here at least was a hint for feeding. I tried him with some other questions, but his chattering, prompt responses were as often as not quite at cross purposes with my question. Some few were appropriate, others quite parrot-like.

I was so intent upon these peculiarities that I scarcely noticed the path we followed. Presently we came to trees, all charred and brown, and so to a bare place covered with a yellow-white incrustation, across which a drifting smoke, pungent in whiffs to nose and eyes, went drifting. On our right, over a shoulder of bare rock, I saw the level blue of the sea. The path coiled down abruptly into a narrow ravine between two tumbled and knotty masses of blackish scoriæ. Into this we plunged.

It was extremely dark, this passage, after the blinding sunlinght reflected from the sulphurous ground. Its walls grew steep, and approached each other. Blotches of green and crimson drifted across my eyes. My conductor stopped suddenly. "Home!" said he, and I stood on a floor of a chasm that was at first absolutely dark to me. I heard some strange noises, and thrust the knuckles of my left hand into my eyes. I became aware of a disagreeable odor, like that of a monkey's cage ill-cleaned. Beyond, the rock opened again upon a gradual slope of sunlit greenery, and on either hand the light smote down through narrow ways into the central gloom.

CHAPTER XII.

The Sayers of the Law

THEN something cold touched my hand. I started violently, and saw close to me a dim pinkish thing, looking more like a flayed child than anything else in the world. The creature had exactly the mild but repulsive features of a sloth, the same low forehead and slow gestures.

As the first shock of the change of light passed, I saw about me more distintly. The little sloth-like creature was standing and staring at me. My conductor had vanished. The place was a narrow passage between high walls of lava, a crack in the knotted rock, and on either side interwoven heaps of sea-mat, palmfans, and reeds leaning against rock formed rough and impenetrably dark dens. The winding way up the ravine between these was scarcely three yards wide, and was disfigured by lumps of decaying fruit-pulp and other refuse, which accounted for the disagreeable stench of the place.

The little pink sloth-creature was still blinking at me when my Ape-man reappeared at the aperture of the nearest of these dens, and beckoned me in. As he did so, a slouching monster wriggled out of one of the places, further up this strange street, and stood up in featureless silhouette against the bright green beyond, staring at me. I hesitated, having half a mind to bolt the way I had come; and then, determined to go through with the adventure, I gripped my nailed stick about the middle and crawled into the little evil-smelling lean-to after my conductor.

It was a semi-circular space, shaped like the half of a bee-hive; and against the rocky wall that formed the inner side of it was a pile of variegated fruits, cocoa-nuts among others. Some rough vessels of lava and wood stood about the floor, and one on a rough stool. There was no fire. In the darkest corner of the hut sat a shapeless mass of darkness that grunted "Hey!" as I came in, and my Ape-man stood in the dim light of the doorway and held out a split cocoa-nut to me as I crawled into the other corner and squatted down. I took it, and began gnawing it, as serenely as possible, in spite of a certain trepidation and the nearly intolerable closeness of the den. The little pink sloth-creature stood in the aperture of the hut, and something else with a drab face and bright eyes came staring over its shoulder.

"Hey!" came out of the lump of mystery opposite. "It is a man."

"It is a man," gabbled my conductor,—"a man, a man, a five-man, like me."

"Shut up!" said the voice from the dark, and grunted. I gnawed my cocoa-nut amid an impressive stillness.

I peered hard into the blackness, but could distinguish nothing.

"It is a man," the voice repeated. "He comes to live with us?"

It was a thick voice, with something in it—a kind of whistling overtone—that struck me as peculiar; but the English accent was strangely good.

The Ape-man looked at me as though he expected something. I perceived the pause was interrogative. "He comes to live with you," I said.

"It is a man. He must learn the Law."

I began to distinguish now a deeper blackness in the black, a vague outline of a hunched-up figure. Then I noticed the opening of the place was darkened by two more black heads. My hand tightened on my stick.

The thing in the dark repeated in a louder tone, "Say the words." I had missed its last remark. "Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law," it repeated in a kind of sing-song.

I was puzzled.

"Say the words," said the Ape-man, repeating, and the figures in the doorway echoed this, with a threat in the tone of their voices.

I realised that I had to repeat this idiotic formula; and then began the insanest ceremony. The voice in the dark began intoning a mad litany, line by line, and I and the rest to repeat it. As they did so, they swayed from side to side in the oddest way, and beat their hands upon their knees; and I followed their example. I could have imagined I was already dead and in another world. The dark hut, these grotesque dim figures, just flecked here and there by a glimmer of light, and all of them swaying in unison and chanting.

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to suck up Drink; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to eat Fish or Flesh; that is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to claw the Bark of Trees; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?

"Not to chase other Men; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?"

And so from the prohibition of these acts of folly, on to the prohibition of what I thought then were the maddest, most impossible, and most indecent things one could well imagine. A kind of rhythmic fervour fell on all of us; we gabbled and swayed faster and faster, repeating this amazing Law. Superficially the contagion of these brutes was upon me, but deep down within me the laughter and disgust struggled together. We ran through a long list of prohibitions, and then the chant swung round to a new formula.

"*His* is the House of Pain.
"*His* is the Hand that makes.
"*His* is the Hand that wounds.
"*His* is the Hand that heals."

And so on for another long series, mostly quite incomprehensible gibberish to me about *Him*, whoever he might be. I could have fancied it was a dream, but never before have I heard chanting in a dream.

"*His* is the lightning flash," we sang. "*His* is the deep, salt sea."

A horrible fancy came into my head that Moreau, after animalising these men, had infected their dwarfed brains with a kind of deification of himself. However, I was too keenly aware of white teeth and strong claws about me to stop my chanting on that account.

"*His* are the stars in the sky."

At last that song ended. I saw the Ape-man's face shining with perspiration; and my eyes being now accustomed to the darkness, I saw more distinctly the figure in the corner from which the voice came. It was the size of a man, but it seemed covered with a dull grey hair almost like a Skye-terrier. What was it? What were they all? Imagine yourself surrounded by all the most horrible cripples and maniacs it is possible to conceive, and you may understand a little of my feelings with these grotesque caricatures of humanity about me.

"He is a five-man, a five-man, a five-man—like me," said the Ape-man.

I held out my hands. The grey creature in the corner leant forward.

"Not to run on all-fours; that is the Law. Are we not Men?" he said.

He put out a strangely distorted talon and gripped my fingers. The thing was almost like the hoof of a deer produced into claws. I could have yelled with surprise and pain. His face came forward and peered at my nails, came forward into the light of the opening of the hut; and I saw with quivering disgust that it was like the face of neither man nor beast, but a mere shock of grey hair, with three shadowy over-archings to mark the eyes and mouth.

"He has little nails," said this grisly creature in his hairy beard. "It is well."

He threw my hand down, and instinctively I gripped my stick.

"Eat roots and herbs; it is His will," said the Ape-man.

"I am the Sayer of the Law," said the grey figure. "Here come all that be new to learn the Law. I sit in the darkness and say the Law."

"It is even so," said one of the beasts in the doorway.

"Evil are the punishments of those who break the Law. None escape."

"None escape," said the Beast Folk, glancing furtively at one another.

"None, none," said the Ape-man,—"none escape. See! I did a little thing, a wrong thing, once. I jabbered, jabbered, stopped talking. None could understand. I am burnt, branded in the hand. He is great. He is good!"

"None escape," said the grey creature in the corner.

"None escape," said the Beast People, looking askance at one another.

"For every one the want that is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "What you will want we do not know; we shall know. Some want to follow things that move, to watch and slink and wait and spring; to kill and bite, bite deep and rich, sucking the blood. It is bad. Not to chase other Men; that is the Law. *Are we not Men?* Not to eat Flesh or Fish; that is the Law. *Are we* not Men?'"

"None escape," said a dappled brute standing in the doorway.

"For every one the want is bad," said the grey Sayer of the Law. "Some want to go tearing with teeth and hands into the roots of things, snuffing into the earth. It is bad."

"None escape," said the men in the door.

"Some go clawing trees; some go scratching at the graves of the dead; some go fighting with foreheads or feet or claws; some bite suddenly, none giving occasion; some love uncleanness."

"None escape," said the Ape-man, scratching his calf.

"None escape," said the little pink sloth-creature.

"Punishment is sharp and sure. Therefore learn the Law. Say the words."

And incontinently he began again the strange litany of the Law, and again I and all these creatures began singing and swaying. My head reeled with this jabbering and the close stench of the place; but I kept on, trusting to find presently some chance of a new development.

"Not to go on all-fours; that is the Law. *Are we not Men?*"

We were making such a noise that I noticed nothing of a tumult outside, until some one, who I think was one of the two Swine Men I had seen, thrust his head over the little pink sloth-creature and shouted something excitedly, something that I did not catch. Incontinently those at the opening of the hut vanished; my Ape-man rushed out; the thing that had sat in the dark followed him (I only observed that it was big and clumsy, and covered with silvery hair), and I was left alone. Then before I reached the aperture I heard the yelp of a staghound.

In another moment I was standing outside the hovel, my chair-rail in my hand, every muscle of me quivering. Before me were the clumsy backs of perhaps a score of these Beast People, their misshapen heads half hidden by their shoulder-blades. They were gesticulating excitedly. Other half-animal faces glared interrogation out of the hovels. Looking in the direction in which they faced, I saw coming through the haze under the trees beyond the end of the passage of dens the dark figure and awful white face of Moreau. He was holding the leaping staghound back, and close behind him came Montgomery revolver in hand.

For a moment I stood horror-struck. I turned and saw the passage behind me blocked by another heavy brute, with a huge grey face and twinkling little eyes, advancing towards me. I looked round and saw to the right of me and a half-dozen yards in front of me a narrow gap in the wall of rock through which a ray of light slanted into the shaddows.

"Stop!" cried Moreau as I strode towards this, and then, "Hold him!"

At that, first one face turned towards me and then others. Their bestial minds were happily slow. I dashed my shoulders into a clumsy monster who was turning to see what Moreau meant, and flung him forward into another. I felt his hands fly round, clutching at me and missing me. The little pink sloth-creature dashed at me, and I gashed down its ugly face with the nail in my stick, and in another minute was scrambling up a steep side pathway, a kind of sloping chimney, out of the ravine. I heard a howl behind me, and cries of "Catch him!" "Hold him!" and the grey-faced creature appeared behind me and jammed his huge bulk into the cleft. "Go on! go on!" they howled. I clambered up the narrow cleft in the rock and came out upon the sulphur on the westward side of the village of the Beast Men.

That gap was altogether fortunate for me, for the narrow chimney, slanting obliquely upward, must have impeded the nearer pursuers. I ran over the white space and down a steep slope, through a scattered growth of trees, and came to a low-lying stretch of tall reeds, through which I pushed into a dark, thick undergrowth that was black and succulent under foot. As I plunged into the reeds, my foremost pursuers emerged from the gap. I broke my way through this undergrowth for some minutes. The air behind me and about me was soon full of threatening cries. I heard the tumult of my pursuers in the gap up the slope, then the crashing of the reeds, and every now and then the crackling crash of a branch. Some of the creatures roared like excited beasts of prey. The staghound yelped to the left. I heard Moreau and Montgomery shouting in the same direction. I turned sharply to the right. It seemed to me even then that I heard Montgomery shouting for me to run for my life.

Presently the ground gave rich and oozy under my feet; but I was desperate and went headlong into it, struggled through knee-deep, and so came to a winding path among tall canes. The noise of my pursuers passed away to my left. In one place three strange, pink, hopping animals, about the size of cats, bolted before my footsteps. This pathway ran up-hill, across another open space covered with white incrustation, and plunged into a canebrake again. Then suddenly it turned parallel with the edge of a steep-walled gap, which came without warning, like the ha-ha of an English park,—turned with an unexpected abruptness. I was still running with all my might, and I never saw this drop until I was flying headlong through the air.

I fell on my forearms and head, among thorns, and rose with a torn ear and bleeding face. I had fallen into a precipitous ravine, rocky and thorny, full of hazy mist which drifted about me in wisps, and with a narrow streamlet from which this mist came meandering down the centre. I was astonished at this thin fog in the full blaze of daylight; but I had no time to stand wondering then. I turned to my right, down-stream, hoping to come to the sea in that direction, and so have my way open to drown myself. It was only later I found that I had dropped my nailed stick in my fall.

Presently the ravine grew narrower for a space, and carelessly I stepped into the stream. I jumped out again pretty quickly, for the water was almost

boiling. I noticed too there was a thin sulphurous scum drifting upon its coiling water. Almost immediately came a turn in the ravine, and the indistinct blue horizon. The nearer sea was flashing the sun from a myriad facets. I saw my death before me; but I was hot and panting, with the warm blood oozing out on my face and running pleasantly through my veins. I felt more than a touch of exultation too, at having distanced my pursuers. It was not in me then to go out and drown myself yet. I started back the way I had come.

I listened. Save for the hum of the gnats and the chirp of some small insects that hopped among the thorns, the air was absolutely still. Then came the yelp of a dog, very faint, and a chattering and gibbering, the snap of a whip, and voices. They grew louder, then fainter again. The noise receded up the stream and faded away. For a while the chase was over; but I knew now how much hope of help for me lay in the Beast People.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Parley

I TURNED again and went on down towards the sea. I found the hot stream broadened out to a shallow, weedy sand, in which an abundance of crabs and long-bodied, many-legged creatures started from my footfall. I walked to the very edge of the salt water, and then I felt I was safe. I turned and stared, arms akimbo, at the thick green behind me, into which the steamy ravine cut like a smoking gash. But, as I say, I was too full of excitement and (a true saying, though those who have never known danger may doubt it) too desperate to die.

Then it came into my head that there was one chance before me yet. While Moreau and Montgomery and their bestial rabble chased me through the island, might I not go round the beach until I came to their enclosure,—make a flank march upon them, in fact, and then with a rock lugged out of their loosely-built wall, perhaps, smash in the lock of the smaller door and see what I could find (knife, pistol, or what not) to fight them with when they returned? It was at any rate something to try.

So I turned to the westward and walked along by the water's edge. The setting sun flashed his blinding heat into my eyes. The slight Pacific tide was running in with a gentle ripple. Presently the shore fell away southward, and the sun came round upon my right hand. Then suddenly, far in front of me, I saw first one and then several figures emerging from the bushes,—Moreau, with his grey staghound, then Montgomery, and two others. At that I stopped.

They saw me, and began gesticulating and advancing. I stood watching them approach. The two Beast Men came running forward to cut me off from the undergrowth, inland. Montgomery came, running also, but straight towards me. Moreau followed slower with the dog.

At last I roused myself from my inaction, and turning seaward walked straight into the water. The water was very shallow at first. I was thirty yards out before the waves reached to my waist. Dimly I could see the intertidal creatures darting away from my feet.

"What are you doing, man?" cried Montgomery.

I turned, standing waist deep, and stared at them. Montgomery stood panting at the margin of the water. His face was bright-red with exertion, his long flaxen hair blown about his head, and his dropping nether lip showed his irregular teeth. Moreau was just coming up, his face pale and firm, and the dog at his hand barked at me. Both men had heavy whips. Farther up the beach stared the Beast Men.

"What am I doing? I am going to drown myself," said I.

Montgomery and Moreau looked at each other. "Why?" asked Moreau.

"Because that is better than being tortured by you."

"I told you so," said Montgomery, and Moreau said something in a low tone.

"What makes you think I shall torture you?" asked Moreau.

"What I saw," I said. "And those—yonder."

"Hush!" said Moreau, and held up his hand.

"I will not," said I. "They were men: what are they now? I at least will not be like them."

I looked past my interlocutors. Up the beach were M'ling, Montgomery's attendant, and one of the white-swathed brutes from the boat. Farther up, in the shadow of the trees, I saw my little Ape-man, and behind him some other dim figures.

"Who are these creatures?" said I, pointing to them and raising my voice more and more that it might reach them. "They were men, men like yourselves, whom you have infected with some bestial taint,—men whom you have enslaved, and whom you still fear. You who listen," I cried, pointing now to Moreau and shouting past him to the Beast Men,—"You who listen! Do you not see these men still fear you, go in dread of you? Why, then, do you fear them? You are many—"

"For God's sake," cried Montgomery, "stop that, Prendick!"

"Prendick!" cried Moreau.

They both shouted together, as if to drown my voice; and behind them lowered the staring faces of the Beast Men, wondering, their deformed hands hanging down, their shoulders hunched up. They seemed, as I fancied, to be trying to understand me, to remember, I thought, something of their human past.

I went on shouting, I scarcely remember what, —that Moreau and Montgomery could be killed, that they were not to be feared: that was the burden of what I put into the heads of the Beast People. I saw the green-eyed man in the dark rags, who had met me on the evening of my arrival, come out from among the trees, and others followed him, to hear me better. At last for want of breath I paused.

"Listen to me for a moment," said the steady voice of Moreau; "and then say what you will."

"Well?" said I.

He coughed, thought, then shouted: "Latin, Prendick! bad Latin, schoolboy Latin; but try and understand. *Hi non sunt homines; sunt animalia qui nos habemus*—vivisected, A humanising process. I will explain. Come ashore."

I laughed. "A pretty story," said I. "They

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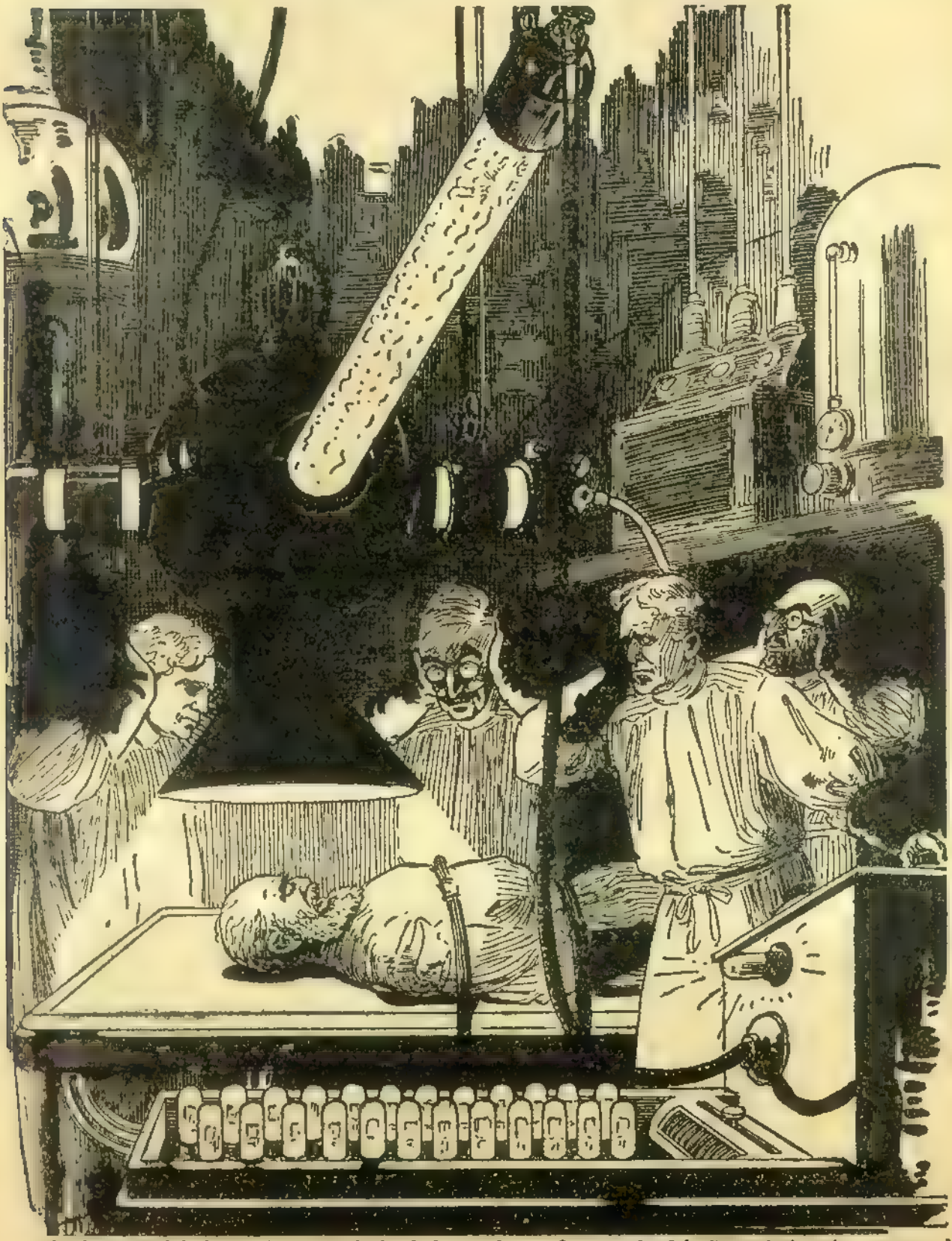
BLASPHEMERS' PLATEAU

By Alexander Snyder



. . . when he perceived the futility of struggling further, he lay quietly. . . . Stevens replaced the disrupted tube with a new one, and the horrendous screech that arose as he closed the circuit seemed almost to have something human in its terrible protest.

I.

A Difficult Place to Get Into

S he expecting you?" asked the hack driver hopefully, extending a gnarled hand for the bag of the elderly newcomer who had just alighted from the late afternoon train.

"Not exactly," Mason informed him, relinquishing the bag. "I just wrote I'd 'drop in on him' one of these days, and receiving no answer to that, I supposed it would be all right for me to come on. Why? What is it?" noting the driver's air of disappointment.

"We can't do business then, I guess, Mister. Leastwise, 'twouldn't be right for me to drive you up there and then have to bring you right back; now would it?"

Mason eyed the shabby old fellow of the delicate scruples with surprise.

"Do you mean to tell me I can't get in unless I'm expected?"

The driver nodded. "Not after dark you can't, Mister. It'd be that by the time we covered the four mile' to his place." He jerked a thumb in the direction of the crow-bait standing dejectedly between the shafts of an ancient vehicle. "The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be," he apologized.

"You're right," agreed Mason, glancing at the horse. "She's no descendant of Pegasus, to judge by externals. Well— what am I to do then, if you're so positive there's no use going up there tonight? Where shall I stay? There's no sense taking the next train out, that is, supposing there is one before morning."

The driver appraised him swiftly. "Well, now, Mister, you could stop up to The Travelers' Hotel for the night, and travel on up in the morning. How'd that suit you? Hotel's a mile in the other direction."

Mason shrugged his shoulders resignedly, " 'Needs must, when the devil drives'—Oh! I beg your pardon! I meant nothing personal," he amended, at the driver's laugh. "All right, then. The Hotel it shall be."

He climbed into the hack agilely enough for one of his apparent years, and settled into the seat next the driver's, while the latter untied the looped reins from around the stock of the whip, resting in its socket, slapped them up and down, and clucked to the mare.

"Are you a native here?" asked Mason, as they backed away from the station and lurched into the road.

"I be'n born and brought up here, Mister," responded the driver, glad of an opportunity to while away the trip ahead.

"Then you probably know Doctor Santurn?"

THIS new author whom we now introduce to our readers, has written not only a dramatic, but a tremendously gripping story, that will hold your interest from beginning to end. Modern science is woven all through it, and the end comes as dramatic as a sudden thunderclap. Here we see a scientist gone drunk with power, until at the climax of his achievement he acclaims himself to be God. But read and see what happens!

Mysterious Sounds—A Secret Menagerie

NO sir! I can't say I do—nor does anyone else 'round about. He's been a mystery here sence he built, up on the Plateau, nigh onto ten year' ago. Beats all how he keeps to himself. Folks do say though——" he stopped apprehensively.

"Go on!" said Mason encouragingly. "You won't offend me. If its the truth, then that's that; and if it's a lie, I'll get him to nail it when I see him tomorrow."

"Well—where'd his menagerie come from?" blurted out the driver, turning half around toward his seat mate.

"Menagerie! Do you mean to say he has one?"

"Yes! An' a 'quarium too!" declared the driver emphatically. "He had the cages and tanks built apart from the house 'fore ever he moved in. An' the funny part of it is—where'd the animals come from? An' the fish? We never did see even one crate come in by way of the railroad station, nor anything that looked like a cage loaded on motor trucks neither. 'Course, there's be'n two or three of us be'n inside the gates on business—repairs an' sich, quite a while ago, an' they saw plenty. An' now'n then there's city visitors like yourself; but they never bring nothin' but small boxes or a handbag. Once in a while, come to think of it, there's heavy machinery comes by freight; but folks t'other side of The Plateau say there never was a load of critters brought in that way neither."

Mason frowned. "What's the difference how they arrived? They probably came by night in covered motor trucks. Don't you know the Doctor is a world-famous biologist? He knows more about animals and what makes them tick than the next best half dozen put together. Get on with you, man! Are you trying to build a mystery around him?"

"No, no, Mister!" protested the driver. "There's funny doin's goes on in those buildings of his'n up there on The Plateau. An' he never shows himself a'tall. He just sends his Jap man down with a little car for mail and supplies, an' keeps to himself year in an' year out, 'cept for three or four men 'round the place. There! We're nearing the Hotel. 'Nother half mile or so an' we'll be there. Whoa!" drawing on the reins. "Hear that?"

"Music? Faint music?" asked Mason.

"Giddap! Yes, Mister. Something like music. Ruther it's radio noises from a tremendous big horn on the roof of the Doctor's tower. We kin hear it just at this point when the breeze's like 'tis now. Funny! Sometimes it sounds like a giant cricket, 'n' then again it sounds like a 'Katydid' or a tree toad. The sound carries most as fur's a locomotive whistle."

Driver and passenger completed the ride in silence, each immersed in thought.

"Well, here we are, Mister!" said the driver as Mason climbed down and paid his fare. "Do you want I should call for you in the morning?"

"Do you want a 'peek' at the place?" smiled Mason. "Very well; make it nine o'clock. Good night!" He turned and entered the small frame

building that boasted the title of Hotel, and was heartily received by the rustic proprietor.

"Sure, now, Mr.——Mason" (glancing at the ancient register in which the newcomer had inscribed his name) "I'll be glad to put you up for the night. I'll show you to your room so's you can freshen up a bit, and when you come down there'll be a snack of supper on the table for you."

What the Local Inn-Keeper Said

IT was rather cool and gusty outdoors, for early summer, and the dark and rutty roadways lacked appeal for an after supper stroll for Mason who contented himself with sitting in the "parlor" with his host. He recounted what the driver had told him.

"'S truth!" said the innkeeper earnestly to his solitary guest. "Ben warn't lying. You try an' get in on The Plateau after dark, an' you'll look down the mean end of a sawed-off shotgun. There's a night-watchman at the gate, an' the wall's high an' studded with broken glass. The watchman won't listen to no talk whatsoever. An' while you're turnin' around preparin' to come back, you'll maybe hear some funny noises from beyond the wall."

"Pardon my asking," interrupted Mason, "but does the Doctor owe anything in the village?"

"No."

"Anybody miss anything?"

"Not so's I've heard," said the innkeeper.

"Anybody disappear without a trace?" ironically.

"I see what you're gettin' at, Mr. Mason. Sort of a polite way of askin' why don't we mind our business if he does no harm? There's not much to do in these parts, though, 'cept to speculate on other folks' business. An' I do admit the Doctor's fair game for the curious."

"Fair enough," admitted Mason. "I haven't seen him in years myself; but from what I know, he likes seclusion and doesn't care for a strange audience, particularly when he's performing some experiment."

"'Tain't vivisection." ventured the host.

"How do you know?"

"The cages get fuller, 'stead of emptier, an' the critters ain't breedin' 'cause there's only one of each. Carpenter knows. He was up there a month ago to reinforce a cage, an' he says a big monkey a'most grabbed him 'tween the bars."

The evening waned rapidly as the innkeeper detailed the petty gossip of the village centering on the "doings" that occurred up on The Plateau; and when Mason climbed gratefully into the huge four-poster with its generous patchquilt, shortly before eleven, he lay wondering what the morrow held in store. Despite his deprecations and attempts to dispel the air of mystery with which the Hotel proprietor had invested the Doctor, some of the village's superstition attached itself to him and disturbed his sleep.

Getting Into the "Blasphemers' Plateau"

AFTER a leisurely breakfast, Mason settled his account, bade the innkeeper adieu, and climbed, for the second time, to his seat in Old Ben's hack, which the garrulous driver had brought around on time.

Jog-jog, talk-talk, jog-jog. Then the labored breathing of the old horse as she hauled her burden along the stiff upgrade. The scrunch of wheels overriding the edges of the ruts; the clop-clop of hoofs on the level stretches; the cool, fresh breezes of early summer—all these various little sounds combined in a pleasant, unobtrusive symphony that lulled the tired senses of the elderly passenger, and soothed him into a state of peaceful, care-free, reverent happiness.

Beyond lay The Plateau, a flattened knoll of some five acres in expanse, toward which the road wound in tortured undulations between other and lesser knolls. As they neared their destination, driver and passenger became aware of a high stone wall completely surrounding the estate on The Plateau; and when they had approached closely to the entrance gate, they saw that the top of the wall itself was prickly with broken glass set in cement.

The main port of entry appeared to be a tall, iron door set flush in the wall, and Ben sought the bell affixed to the wall next to it. He pressed the button, and then drew back a trifle nervously, and stood abreast with Mason, who waited to be admitted.

Almost at once a small wicket, head high, was drawn back from within, and a stolid face with heavy lidded eyes appeared in the opening and regarded them passively.

"Well?" challenged the watchman belligerently, "What's your business?"

"I'd like to see the Doctor," said Mason, passing his card through the wicket. "Take him my card, please."

"Wait!" said the guard, and closed the wicket in the door.

"See!" whispered Ben triumphantly. "What did I tell you? At night you'd get no answer a'tall, 'less you tried to get over the wall, 'n' then the answer'd be buckshot most likely."

There was the sound as of an iron bolt withdrawn, and the heavy door swung inward.

"Come in!" said the guard, taking Mason's bag. "The Doctor'll see you at once!" And to Ben, who would have followed, "No! You can't come in! See the sign 'Private'?" He closed the door in the face of the disappointed hackman.

The residence was set back at some little distance within the gate, and as Mason traversed the gravel path to it with his guide, he glanced with interest about the enclosure. By now, a thousand questions had sprung to mind, elicited by his unusual reception, by that forbidding wall and medieval gate, by the strange-looking buildings just beyond the residence, and by the house itself, drab and repellent in the bright sunshine of the summer morning.

He followed the guard up a short flight of four steps, and then, at a gesture from the man, preceded him through the vestibule, and stopped on perceiving the subject of his visit.

A Good Reception From Dr. Santurn

ON the threshold of a low-raftered sitting room, which was sumptuously furnished around a principal color motif of mahogany, stood Doctor Santurn, with hand extended.

"Gary!" he exclaimed delightedly, hurrying for-

ward to shake Mason's hand and pat him on the shoulder. "You're more welcome than I can say. When did you arrive?"

"Last night," said Mason dryly. "But they told me——"

"Enough!" cried the Doctor contritely. "Hoist by my own petard! This red tape with which I am forced to surround myself seems to have snared me badly if it deprived me of your company last night. Of all the people I've longed to see! How much time have you?" he broke off.

"All there is," declared Mason leisurely. "My last book is now on the presses, and I'm at 'loose ends' for a while." He regarded his old friend closely.

"I'm just 'sizing you up,'" he said, "to see what ravages the years have wrought."

"And you find——?" asked the Doctor.

"Few. You're still slight. You always were more ethereal than physical, I recall. Those spectacle lenses are just a trifle thicker—a natural thing for a bookworm. Same amount of hair, nearer white than gray," patting his own thinned out crop ruefully, "and the same old world-defying twirl to those distinctive moustaches of yours. On the whole, I should say the years have treated you kindly."

"And you, too," rejoined the Doctor. "I'm more overjoyed every second, that you can make a long visit with me. I'll have you settled all ship-shape and proper in short order."

He picked up a felt hammer and smote a huge gong with the mallet, the mellow, booming note instantly summoning a bland and imperturbable Japanese.

"Suki," said the Doctor, "you will prepare the south bedchamber for Mr. Mason and make him so comfortable that he won't want to leave in a hurry. Take his bag up now."

A mirthless smile appeared and disappeared so quickly on Suki's face that Mason almost doubted he had seen it.

"If you can withstand the pressure of your curiosity," said the Doctor, "save your questions until later, until you orientate yourself. I suppose you'd like to make the rounds with me?"

"Surely!" said Mason. "Is that the library beyond?"

"You scent books as unerringly as a setter its quarry," smiled the Doctor. "Very well. First the library." He drew Mason to the door at the far end of the sitting room.

"Here are some thousands of volumes," said the Doctor, "and every one earns its keep. Your own archaeology series has its own niche of honor, and is exempt from the rules for a book's admission here."

"Rules?" asked Mason, puzzled.

"Certainly. We have no room for any but books of science here, and new books, at that. As soon as a new volume comes out that supersedes or disproves an old one, out goes the old! With one other exception——Ah! You've come to it!" as Mason, who had been browsing at random among the formidable array of tomes stopped before a section in the far corner of the room.

"Why, what's this, Oliver?" cried Mason in astonishment. "Books on religion! The 'Koran,' 'Holy Bible,' 'Oriental and Occidental Beliefs,' 'Superstitions,' 'Agnosticism,' 'Bhuddistic Philosophy.' I'm quite astounded! I had no idea that you were so interested in theology and religion generally."

Doctor Santurn's eyes gleamed oddly behind the shielding lenses of his heavy spectacles.

"So much so, Gary, that all my work revolves about my personal beliefs. I am attempting to throw new light on Immortality and the Resurrection via the laboratory route."

Going Through the Laboratory and Meeting the Assistants

MASON was conscious of a twinge of fear for his old friend's sanity, and scrutinized his face closely, hopefully seeking the clue to some jest; but finding the Doctor in serious mood, he forced himself to speak casually.

"What luck, Oliver?" he asked.

"Some," confessed the Doctor. "Considerable. In fact, almost more than you will be able to assimilate or credit for some time. But enough of this mysticism! We can return here later. Come with me, if you will, and acclimate yourself to the atmosphere up here on The Plateau."

He led the way through a short hallway, passing the foot of a staircase which ran to the upper floor.

"Living quarters are upstairs," he explained. "The kitchen is back here, to one side, where Suki reigns unmolested. The main laboratory is in the rear extension on the other side. We'll leave that until this evening. Just now let us visit the individual workshops."

They left the house by the front way, following the gravel path around the side and to the rear, to the first of three squat, gray buildings. This one was surmounted by a cylindrical brick tower, fully thirty feet in height, and this, in turn, was topped by a sixty-foot mast, carefully braced, and guyed to cement blocks set in the ground itself on either side of the edifice. A similar mast rose from the ground a hundred feet away, and between the two depended the strands of a cage type of radio antenna.

"This is the electro-physical laboratory," explained the Doctor, as he opened the door and led the way in.

"Hello Stevens!" he said, "what are you up to now?"

A pleasant-faced, clean shaven man of middle age, with a scholarly stoop to his shoulders, rose from the laboratory stool on which he had been perched, intent on his work. He kept his hand on a knob-like contrivance connected with a peculiar type of galvanometer and some other, unfamiliar apparatus, and shut off a small, almost noiseless alternator, the armature of which continued to turn for almost a half minute after the circuit had been opened, so great had been its speed.

Doctor Santurn performed the introduction.

"You can speak freely in front of Mr. Mason," he advised.

"I am progressing rapidly," reported Stevens, "but I feel somehow that the plasma is contamin-

ated. The vibratory rate is lower than I expected. There's resistance somewhere."

"I'll see that Bridges makes up a fresh supply for you," the Doctor assured him. He turned to Mason. "We're just arriving at the responsive vibratory rate of blood plasma," and, seeing the archaeologist's look of incredulity, he continued, "No. We're not delirious. Come along."

The second building was a replica of the first laboratory, externally; but it lacked the tower and radio mast. Doctor Santurn rapped at the door.

"All right, Bridges?" he called. "Sometimes he resents intrusion at a critical moment," he explained in an aside before the door opened.

A bald, weazoned and swarthy individual in a grayish smock appeared in the doorway and glanced at their feet immediately.

"You're all right, Doctor; but I'll have to get a pair of rubbers for this gentleman." He acknowledged the introduction to Mason, excused himself for a moment, and returned at once with a heavy pair of rubbers. Mason put them on, wondering at the thick, cushiony, spring-rubber treads.

"Unlike the other mosques," explained the Doctor with a curious little laugh, "we require you to put on footgear before entering at this shrine of Bridges!"

"Move lightly!" cautioned the little man. "Come in!"

Description of the Work

ROWS on rows of kegs and vats lined the walls, huge containers of chemical reagents from which the smaller stock bottles in their racks were evidently replenished. The glitter of glassware, grotesquely shaped flasks and tubes, the sheen of lacquered brass, scores of test tubes in serried array in racks, an indefineable odor of commingled gases, gave to the room the atmosphere of a Merlin's retreat.

"We do things in a wholesale way," explained Bridges. "We can perform almost any sort of biochemical experiment here, from the infinitesimally small to those requiring a hundredweight or more of materials. There's a bacterial incubator in that corner, and a refrigerator in this—duplicates of those in the 'zoo.'"

"Electrically controlled," supplemented the Doctor. "Most of our heating and all our lighting comes on those wires strung on the poles you passed on the road coming up here. The town beyond supplies us with current, and keeps the meter at their end of our private line, so that the total current consumption is recorded there, no matter what new devices we hook on here. It keeps inspectors from coming up here constantly, and incidentally excludes them from a glimpse of affairs that do not concern them. Naturally, I pay well for the privacy."

He approached the workbench whereon reposed the bulkiest microscope Mason had ever seen. It rested under a glass bell on a rubber pad.

"How far have you gotten, Bridges?" asked his chief.

Bridges waved a hand at a row of stoppered test tubes containing various colored fluids.

"The solutions are still settling, Doctor. That is why I wanted to have you avoid all unnecessary jarring. The qualitative analysis is completed. 'Quantitative' will be finished by this evening. When Stevens checks up with me tonight, I'll make a leukocyte for you!"

Mason gasped audibly, and Doctor Santurn turned to regard him with a self-satisfied smile.

"Are you astounded?" I assure you we're not trying to 'pull your leg.' To paraphrase old Shakespeare, 'There are more things on The Plateau,' Gary, 'than you ever dreamt of in your philosophy.'"

"I don't believe what I've heard!" vociferated Mason stoutly. "How can I? Such things are preposterous! Do you mean to tell me——?"

"Not a thing!" said Doctor Santurn. "Tonight you shall see. At present I want you to steep a bit longer. Let us go over to see Johnssen."

What the Village Says About It All

EXCEEDINGLY bewildered, a trifle loathe to leave the fascination of the bio-chemical laboratory, Mason followed after the Doctor, and with him kept to the path, to the last of the three one-room buildings that lay to the rear of the residence.

"Here we are!" said the Doctor, passing with Mason through the door. "This place houses our menagerie and equarium."

"Then it's true!" exclaimed Mason, recalling the innkeeper's story.

"What is?" asked the Doctor.

"One of the rumors the village is circulating about you."

"Is it a crime to possess a private collection?" asked the Doctor, ironically.

"No-o."

"Here's Johnssen," interrupted the Doctor.

A huge man approached them—a man perhaps fifty years of age, yet whose full head of ash blond hair, unlined, ruddy face and keen, sea-green eyes gave the impression of a remarkable state of preservation.

"What is new here?" asked the Doctor.

"We need a new thermostat for the primate's cage," said Johnssen, the words rumbling slowly and deeply in his throat. "Our youngster coughed once or twice last evening. It was chilly, if you remember, and I'm afraid he caught a cold. The old thermostat sticks, somewhere around seventy, and I'd like to get up to about ninety-five for emergencies."

"Are you referring to that orang?" asked Mason.

"Yes," said Johnssen, "the devil! For a two-year-old specimen born and brought up in captivity, one would think he'd be up to the usual monkey tricks. Not he! He sits there quietly and watches, watches——"

"Born and brought up here?" asked Mason of the Doctor.

"That is correct. He's always been an orphan."

"Cryptic, as most of the things I hear," retorted Mason, a trifle impatiently. "I simply can't contain myself much longer. What is this all about?"

He leaned over the guard rail built around a huge

tank set into the floor, and partitioned off into numerous smaller sections, each of which contained a fish or small amphibian. He waved a hand at the cages set about the walls, the orang being the largest of the various occupants.

"Where are the lions and tigers? The ones the villagers claim to have heard?" asked Mason.

"So long as they didn't claim actually to have seen them," said the Doctor, "my faith in the yokels is unshaken. They merely hear the sounds of certain local insects and birds amplified and sent out through the horn in the tower in order to test the attraction of the sounds for similar species. We occasionally use a radio decoy, so to speak, in testing our transmitter. Also, we convert various forms of radiant energy into 'radio' equivalents, and try them out too, and much noise results. We have actually transmitted the equivalent of radium 'gamma' rays, the various waves found in polarized light and in X-rays, as well as the usual radio waves at the other end of the scale, which reach into the thousands of meters.

"To get back to this collection, however," he continued, "I tell you truthfully that every one of the specimens you see here was born on the premises!"

"That python?"

"Almost three years ago, and he's as big as the usual forty or fifty year old specimen," the Doctor assured him.

"The badger, the lemur, and that brown toad?" persisted Mason.

"Everyone of them!"

"I give up!" confessed Mason.

"You had better, until after luncheon, Gary," advised the Doctor. "Come along, Johnssen! It's time to eat."

The three men left the miniature zoo and aquarium, and strolled back to the house together, where Stevens and Bridges joined them shortly.

Synthetic Snakes

SUKI served them deftly and silently while they conversed about the topics nearest to their hearts. The talk was most amazing to Mason, who was reluctant to appear gullible.

"Mason, here, is an old college chum of mine," explained the Doctor. "After dabbling in science, he commenced on theology, and then, by easy stages drifted into archaeology in order to substantiate for himself some of the beliefs he had picked up. As for me, you see how I have departed from the paths of 'goodness.' You needn't hesitate to speak frankly before our friend here. He'll get the general import of your remarks. He's kept up with events in the scientific world—the known scientific world," he amended.

Stevens began.

"Have you ever heard of a radio wave measuring one meter?"

"Surely!" said Mason affably.

"One of a millimeter?" persisted Stevens.

"Not in radio work, though probably some of the radium wave emanations are shorter than that."

Have you ever heard of a quadrillimeter or a pentillimeter?"

"Get on with you!" said Mason with some asperity. "There are no such words or measurements. You're making game of me!"

Doctor Santurn smiled, the swarthy, weazened Bridges chuckled, and Johnssen rumbled mirthfully.

Bridges took up the cudgels.

"Will synthetic gin produce the 'D.T.'s', to your knowledge," he asked slyly.

"Very likely," snapped Mason, on guard.

"Then a man who has taken sufficient synthetic liquor over a long enough period of time should see synthetic snakes and animals, shouldn't he?"

"Clever!" jeered Mason. "Synthetic snakes! Fancy them!"

"No. Don't fancy them. They exist. You've seen one yourself."

"What! This is too thick for me!" cried Mason; but they gave him no mercy.

"It's your turn, Johnssen," said the Chief.

"Do you remember the ancient myth about Minerva springing forth full-fledged from the head of Jupiter?"

"Yes—well?"

"Of course it's a myth," conceded Johnssen, "But it's not so far from what might be possible."

Mason extended his cigar-case around the table.

"The cigars are 'on me', gentlemen. I assure you they contain no hasheesh or other substance calculated to encourage your fabrications. Münchhausen himself would feel abashed in your presence.

His table-mates laughed in good spirits at his incredulity as they rose to go back to their separate tasks, and to Mason there was something forbiddingly convincing in the fact that not one of them had attempted to bolster his argument for argument's sake.

The Nitrogen Cycle

THE sun had descended through its arc during the afternoon, sending, through the red, stained-glass panels of the westerly windows of the library, queer, bloody mottlings on the backs of the books that lined the walls, as Mason and the Doctor discussed the work on The Plateau.

"Gary, do I appear rational to you?" the Doctor had asked.

"Your question implies some self-doubt as to your own sanity, I presume. Judging from externals, and as a layman, I can truthfully say you appear nothing out of the ordinary. Your manner of speech, however, has disturbed me somewhat; but on the whole I'd say you'd pass as nothing worse than slightly eccentric."

"Ah!" the Doctor had said. "But after I have proceeded a little, you'll think differently, no doubt. Shall I start with fundamentals?"

"Do!"

And then the biologist had entered on the weirdest and most unforseen harangue that it had even been Mason's lot to attend.

"Have you ever heard of the 'nitrogen cycle,' where the element nitrogen, 'fixed' by bacteria on grass roots, is ingested by cattle, turned into proteins, eaten by humans, and returned again to soil and air, and so on ad infinitum?"

"Surely," said Mason, "That's elementary."

"That's Immortality!" corrected Doctor Santurn. "Nitrogen immortality, and just as demonstratable in every element.

"Nitrogen will always be nitrogen so long as the

orbits of the electrons in its atom remain undisturbed. A change or a disturbance of the electrons will transform it into something else; perhaps into heavier or lighter nitrogen, perhaps into an entirely different substance. I know that to be true of every element.

"Now we take a big jump, and consider a human being just before 'death' occurs.

"The blood courses through the vascular system, nourishing the tissues. Then the vital impulse ceases. The circulation stops. The tissue cells, starved for oxygen and nourishment, begin to disintegrate into their inert, protoplasmic elements.

"Electronic activity in the individual atoms, however, goes on forever, despite the gross dissolution and decay of the body. The elementary matter of which the body is composed is indestructible no matter what form the body ultimately attains in the process of disintegration.

"That's Nature's method of analysis, of reducing a body into the individual and original elements which compose it. Does she waste these elements?

"She does not! Of course not! She borrows a few carbon molecules here, a little calcium there, perhaps some sulphur and hydrogen elsewhere. Then she combines them in proper proportion, kindles them with the magic wand of radiant energy, and presto! A new living organism is in our midst—perhaps an amoeba, or one of the yeasts, mayhap bird or beast, or even a new human being!"

"You mean," said Mason intensely interested, "That Death merely disarranges the atomic composition of a body by interfering with the vibratory rate of its electrons, and then, by a rearrangement of the chemical elements of the deceased, and a new vibratory impulse, Nature creates a new form of life from the old?"

"Essentially, yes!" agreed the Doctor. "Only your definitions of Death, Nature, and Life mean separate things to you; whereas to me they mean God. Now, right here, I am about to utter what may sound like blasphemy to those ears of yours which drank in too much in those theology lectures of long ago, when you were just a plastic and impressionable boy.

The Doctor and His Visitor Disagree

"IF *I* can do these things—if *I* can reduce an range the same elements so they'll again be organism to its components and then rearinstinct with life, will I not be God myself?"

"I see," said Mason, his voice bitter with disappointment. "'*Me und Gott*' as the Kaiser once remarked. You're a megalomaniac."

"Your reactions do you credit, Gary," said Doctor Santurn, shrugging his shoulders apologetically. "But don't misunderstand me. I am not, I have no desire to be—Divine. I am just an inchworm measuring its length against the unknown end of Science's yardstick, in an attempt to reach a certain goal."

"A non-existent goal!" snorted Mason disgustedly.

"I desire to prove," continued the Doctor, "that spiritual Immortality does not exist, because physical, atomic Immortality precludes the possibility. And that goes for Resurrection, too. A man's body dies, disintegrates, and his atoms are used again to build other forms. His 'spirit' is merely the vibration which stimulates the electrons in their orbits."

"Yes?" sneered Mason skeptically.

The Doctor flushed, but continued in the same, pedantic manner.

"In radio work there are two sorts of waves we recognize; the 'damped,' or extinguished type, and the continuous or undamped variety.

"Mortal life is subject to damped impulses. The damping of vibrations may take place in a single cell in an hour; in man, a vast collection of cells, it may require 'threescore and ten', or, in the case of our old friend Methuselah, nine hundred and sixty three years. Barring accident, and applying a proper, continuous vibratory impulse to man, we should be enabled to keep him going indefinitely.

"I am not interested in that aspect of Immortality, my friend. It would interfere with the economic scheme of things. But I am desirous of showing that there is no 'spirit' that persists beyond man's dissolution. Death merely damps his vital vibrations, extinguishes the impulse, so to speak. Only his molecules, atoms and electrons live on forever."

He fell silent, lost in reverie; and Mason wrapped in horrified speculation, did not disturb him. At length he broke the silence.

"And when you demonstrate your thesis to Mankind, Oliver, what do you expect to accomplish?"

Doctor Santurn brought up his wandering thoughts with a jerk, recollected time, place and adversary, and formulated his answer.

"Ah! Gary! I want to wipe out religion, the curse of humanity! I want men to live their years with the knowledge that what they waste here cannot, by any form of expiation, be made up in the 'Hereafter.' That 'Heaven' holds no greater reward than they are capable of achieving right here in the one existence; and that 'Hell' is a consciousness of error. When there are no barriers of religion between man and man, such as differences in faith now present, then the Brotherhood of Man will have arrived."

"You forget one thing," interrupted Mason, "Man's tendency to turn for assistance in time of stress to a Higher Power."

The Doctor Not An Atheist

"MAN is a worm!" retorted Doctor Santurn. "Do you actually believe God guides the destinies of every individual bit of living protoplasm? He does, yes, in a wholesale way. He leaves the inconsequential details to the community. He endows us with knowledge sufficient for our well-being, and with a sense of ethics for the sake of society. He gives us the rudiments, the formulae for successful living, and then washes His hands of us, knowing that our neighbors will reward or punish us as we deserve."

"You are not exactly an atheist," said Mason, puzzled, "And yet——."

"I? An atheist? Hardly, Gary. I do believe this much: that a Great Power created the earth and all that is therein. But He or It merely supplied the crude elements that might still be found to-day if all living matter were reduced to its lowest common components.

"Then He planted a cell here, another there, and gave them the initial impulse that made them in-

stinct with what you call 'life'. The rest He left to Evolution, which adapted them to changing conditions and environments through the aeons."

"If I understand you correctly," rejoined Mason, "Evolution, Nature, call it whatever you will, is the only true minister of the Deity?"

Doctor Santurn nodded, pleased.

"Call it that, or call it a physical, chemical, or a mechanical force, so long as you leave out all reference to the spiritual."

The Effect On the Visitor, Mason

SOMETHING clutched at Mason's heart then, perhaps the memory of his father, long ago on a Thanksgiving Day saying grace over the festive board of the little New England farmhouse. He thought too, of his mother, laid away to the accompaniment of a clerical assurance of her spiritual persistence; of his own wedding and the old phrase, "Whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder"; and of the same dear wife's promise, just prior to her decease, to wait for him on the 'Other Side'.

But Oliver Santurn would deny these blessed things to mankind, he thought bitterly. He would rob humanity of the fruits, and leave them the husks.

It was all too preposterous, of course! Neither the Doctor nor any other man could compass these wild visions and bring them to fruition; every wailing soul, outraged, from the time of Cro-Magnon on downward through the ages, would frustrate them.

It did serve to show him, however, a cold and sinister picture of one whom he had thought of warmly as a friend for almost forty years.

Some of the Wonders!

DOCTOR Santurn's main laboratory in the extension to the rear of the residence was brilliantly illuminated by searchlights set well away in the corners, so as to be non-interfering magnetically with the delicate apparatus assembled on the insulated table in the center. The clear, white beams were directed against a cluster of parabolic reflectors, suspended from the domed ceiling, which focused the light upon the table below.

The room itself was somewhat of a composite of the three Mason had visited in the morning, and was reserved for the purpose of correlating the separate facts ascertained in the individual departments, and applying them in actual experiment.

The Doctor and his assistants were garbed in sterile white surgeons' garb, gauze-masked and rubber-gloved, and they had provided the visitor with a similar outfit. He now stood listening attentively to the Chief's remarks.

"The slide is sterile, as you see, having been carefully subjected to heavy, moist heat pressure in the sterilizer for thirty minutes. The microscope shows it to be free from organisms. The instruments Bridges is using have also been carefully sterilized. Watch him carefully as I call off rates and quantities!"

Under what appeared to Mason as the central lens of a quadruplex microscope, Bridges placed another sterile glass slide, and to it transferred an infinitesimal speck of some element. The little man now bent to a stereoscopic eyepiece, and with a delicate stylus tapered down to the invisibility of a Wollaston wire, teased and crushed the speck until Mason could no longer discern it.

"He is breaking down that particle into its basic crystals," murmured the Doctor in explanation. "It is an easier method—arrived at by us after considerable research—to use separate and individual crystals whose atomic weights we know, than to add or subtract via the scales method. We used to, at first; but now we have listed the exact weights of basic crystals."

He turned towards Bridges. "Three!" he ordered.

At Bridges' invitation, Mason peered through the eyepiece, and taking the fine probe in his unpracticed fingers, saw what appeared to be a telegraph pole prodding at a great pile of small, white, granular boulders. There was a deep valley beyond the mass, and across the gap lay three of the small builders by themselves.

Again and again the Doctor called off substances and quantities, until at last the requisite number of various crystals had been assembled in an inert mass on a fresh slide, a drop of clear blood serum added, and the whole surrounded by an incredibly thin iridium washer, and sealed by a cover glass.

Mason looked again through the quadruplex microscope and felt reassured that the mass was actually inert, a mound of chemicals in a puddle of clear fluid.

"Your turn, Stevens!" called the Doctor. "Have you found the rate?"

"Yes, Doctor. The wave is one hundred and five pentillimeters for human leukocytes. Various harmonics will produce mammalian, piscatory, or serpentine varieties. Shall I proceed?"

"By all means," urged the Chief.

24 Steps of Amplification

A BANK of twenty-four vacuum tubes, somewhat resembling those used for radio purposes, had been arranged at the end of the table opposite the microscopical and chemical apparatus; and to a metallic slab in their midst, Bridges now carefully transferred the slide with sterile tweezers.

Stevens then turned a milli-vernier lateral clamp so that its edges made contact with the flat iridium washer under the coverglass on the slide.

"With twenty four cascaded steps of radio frequency amplification ahead of it," explained Stevens," and the contents of this slide acting as the grid of the detector, a tremendous electronic impulse can be imparted."

He stepped to a corner of the room and wheeled into position a squat carriage from which a heavily insulated cable ran back to a special socket in the wall. Upon the carriage rested a box-shaped piece of apparatus the size of a large trunk, which Stevens referred to as a "neo-split-wave radio transmitter."

"It's just the reverse of the heterodyne principle, you know," he explained. "It steps the wave down as far as we want it, and we do need a very short wave to compete with and surpass the gamma rays of radium. Now we're ready," he said, focusing the wave director toward an almost invisible loop aerial on the receptor, and adjusting his controls.

"Six and eighty two hundredths of a second

should be sufficient exposure," he remarked, setting the electric, split-second automatic stop.

"Stand back, please!"

As the little group moved slightly to one side of the path of the ray, Stevens closed the primary circuit of the transmitter.

A weird, horrific screech filled the room, as though an invisible Twentieth Century Limited express train had applied its brakes suddenly to screaming steel rails. All the Jinnis of Hell together could hardly equal the terror of it, thought Mason.

The Swan Song of a Vacuum Tube

AND then silence descended, broken only by the faint, rattling, tinkle of broken glass falling somewhere inside the box on the carriage. Stevens smiled.

"That was the swan-song of the transmitting tube. Tubes always collapse under the strain when used for a full exposure. We exhaust their three years of possible usefulness in a few, hectic seconds, and their elements shriek in protest as they disintegrate."

"Hurray!" interrupted Johnssen. "Bring the slide back before our subject freezes to death. I'll have to warm it with a light bath and give it oxygen."

The slide was immediately and deftly transferred back to its seat under the microscope lens, and treated to a bath of light directed at it laterally, and the cover glass lifted for an instant.

"You shall be the first to look, Gary," directed Doctor Santurn. "I think you know from observation how to focus the microscope. It is simply the old type worked out to almost absolute perfection."

Mason's eyes were affixed to the stereoscopic attachment, the milli-vernier adjustment screw turning slowly between his fingers.

Back and forth, back and forth, he turned the adjustment screw, raising and lowering the tube columns until the field cleared. Then Mason's hand drew slowly away from the super-microscope.

He gave a startled cry.

"Good God, Oliver! Something's moving! Skimming about here and there in the drop of fluid! It can't be—it's impossible!"

"Is it?" asked the Doctor testily. "I thought you inspected every step of the process yourself."

"I did—I did!" cried Mason excitedly, still watching the unicellular bit of life moving about in its element. "Only this—" he turned and looked at the silent group, with his arms stretched to them appealingly.

"This is no hoax, gentlemen? It isn't an elaborate farce at my expense? It's true? Is it?"

One by one they gravely nodded affirmation of the genuineness of what he had seen, and at last he faltered a little, and breathing with difficulty turned to the Doctor.

"I—I'm not well, Oliver. I'd like to rest a bit. This thing has struck me all of a heap!"

More Scientific Miracles Told Of

IT seemed incredible to Mason that only twenty-four hours' earlier he had been seated with the proprietor of The Travelers' Hotel in the village, laughing and conversing light-heartedly over the whimsical absurdities, suspicions and superstitions of the natives, as related by the host.

That was another world, another existence as far as the Poles away from this atmosphere of deadly, calm, fixity of purpose with the destruction of mankind's beloved and familiar beliefs as its goal.

Again in the library, resting from the shock of what he had witnessed in the laboratory, Mason sat *tête-à-tête* with the biologist and listened with strained absorption to his friend's remarks. ("Friend? I'm not certain!" thought Mason.)

"What you saw performed, this evening," the Doctor was saying, "was the achievement of a goal we have already reached by a slightly different and easier method. You saw a single cell created. We have gone further—much further.

"Every one of the fish and mammals in Johnssen's care was born in a similar manner. Only we didn't create them cell by cell. We merely obtained the unfertilized fish roe, or reptilian eggs, or mammalian ova from various private aquaria and zoological collections all over the country, wherever a female specimen had freshly expired or been killed.

"It is easier to start with the unfertilized primary cell, actuate it in the laboratory, and permit its gestation and growth thereafter in a natural manner.

"Again—we have gone beyond even this. We know the composition of the eggs and ova of more than fifty varieties of organisms. We have duplicated them successfully and actuated them with vibratory impulses equivalent to the fertilization and germination processes of 'Nature'. We control the sex at will by limitation of the chromosomes of the primary cell. In most respects, this method is the simpler of the two we have worked out.

"The other method, of which you saw an example tonight, is a step toward creating the individual tissues of the grown body. We have already duplicated the main, or parenchyme elements of several varieties of connective tissue—namely, areolar, fibrous, elastic, reticular, and the like.

"Blood, however, presents a difficult problem, and is taking longer to duplicate, because of the various cellular elements in it which exist in changing proportions. We're getting there, though!"

"And if you do?" asked Mason, hanging on each word of the highly technical description of the Doctor's work.

"'And when we do', you should have said," rejoined Doctor Santurn.

"When we do," he continued, "we'll use the human ovum now in Johnssen's incubator, *and artificially create a human being!*"

"Damn your matter-of-fact confidence!" thought Mason.

"Just now," resumed the Doctor, "we want to be able to duplicate every variety of human blood we encounter in order to prepare for any emergency we may encounter that may arise after the birth of our subject. Transfusion, for instance."

Mason shivered slightly.

A Discussion in Theology

IN his reverent delving into the archives of the past, 'midst African sand dunes and buried Greek and Roman cities, he had come across the records of unspeakable practices, horrific and re-

volting; but never had he sensed so sinister an aura as that which surrounded the quiet-voiced, mild-mannered scientist who droned of his hopes and accomplishments.

If only he had the desire to dedicate his brilliant discoveries to the cure of disease, to the alleviation of suffering, to the elevation of Mankind and the Glory of God!

But no! His purpose was to render null and void all that had inspired faith in spiritual reality since the dawn of human life on the earth.

"Your work is monstrous, Oliver!" he said.

"No matter how good your intentions may be, you are preparing to foist on humanity something that they will abominate!"

Doctor Santurn spoke with a tinge of sarcasm in his voice, which was pitched slightly higher and sounded somewhat strained.

"Since when are you a moralist, Gary?"

"Since this very moment, Oliver! You'll knock the props from under civilization and offer cold consolation in return. The sort of Immortality you believe in is no solace to the average man, even if your theories are entirely correct—which I am not prepared to admit."

"Stuff and nonsense! Do you really suppose, if you should die this minute, you'd go to a 'Hereafter' clad in celestial habiliments, but still appearing your present age—wrinkles, bald spot and all? Have you ever thought seriously of it Gary? What age would you be if you died and went to 'Heaven'? Would you dwell through Infinity agelessly, awaiting Gabriel's saxophone to clothe yourself again in the mortal clay you had left behind?

"You wouldn't find it, Gary! Not on Resurrection Day. You'd find that while you had strayed off, Nature had borrowed some of your very material molecules and employed them elsewhere in a most useful manner.

"Then the only recourse left you, if there should be a 'You', would be to appropriate unto yourself the Oriental belief in reincarnation, find yourself a new organism about to be born, and crawl into swaddling clothes for a new start—perhaps as a sacred cow, or a cat!

"Stuff and nonsense, Gary! How could you bring yourself expediently to believe in a 'heathen' doctrine?"

"Stop—stop it!" cried Mason, feeling as if some roiling hand had stirred up the mud of doubt on these very questions which had always secretly troubled him.

"On the other hand," went on the Doctor, as though Mason had not spoken, "Consider these benefits: Men and women born free of any taint—physically free from blemish, and psychologically exempt from the age-old inhibitions and fears that hamper them to-day. 'Religion' is responsible, basically, for most of these psychic handicaps."

"Will they all be soulless automatons?" interrupted Mason, rallying again to the attack. "All of one level of mediocrity or genius? All with the same tastes, desires and capabilities?

"Granting your so-called 'benefits', what becomes of man's age-old desire for perpetuation in the traits of his children? What of his innate urge for perpetuation after he ceases to walk among the living?

"Instead of a soul, you claim he becomes a completely damped impulse in the ether. Try and tell men that, and see whether reason or instinct prevails!

"At your peril attempt to ram your 'Brotherhood of Man' scheme down their throats in the manner you propose.

"Oh, yes! Just try!"

But the Doctor merely laughed, refused to be drawn into further argument, and prepared to retire.

A Feeling of Repulsion Begins to Grow

TIME stood still, up there on The Plateau; and the absence of newspapers, even of calendars, had its effect on Mason who lapsed quickly into the routine of the place.

Repelled by what he saw and heard, yet, nevertheless, fascinated by each step forward in the monstrous work, he spoke in a half-hearted manner of taking his departure, only to comply with the Doctor's cynically veneered proposal that he "stick it out."

What he had witnessed during the first few hours following his arrival had created within him a deeper repugnance than he had believed himself capable of feeling. Gregarious by instinct, tolerant of the foibles and failings of the *genus homo*, and even indulgent of some of them personally, Mason brought to bear his best arguments to turn Doctor Santurn aside from the accomplishment of what he finally termed "Hellish desires."

The biologist had indulged in another of his mild laughs at that; but if he had proclaimed his intention at the top of his voice, it could not have served better to convince Mason that wordy interference would be futile.

For the first time the archaeologist became aware of his own duality of nature. Ordinarily frank to the utmost, more comfortable as donor than as supplicant, there rose from his inner consciousness the knowledge that he would travel devious and subtle routes, if need be, to circumvent the Doctor. He was no longer in doubt as to the man's ability to create at will, many varieties of organisms.

Johnssen's charges became more numerous day by day, and whatever had once been animated in the laboratories on The Plateau was jealously guarded and nurtured.

Each day had its definite assignment to be completed, the schedule being laid down on the preceding evening; and as Mason contributed an apparently eager curiosity, the Doctor and his staff soon grew used to his appearance in this laboratory or that. They even found amusement in directing him to push this button or throw that switch, and watching his amazement at the results.

They were playing with the Higher Science, and it is doubtful if they could have recalled the rudimentary principles upon which their discoveries were based, so accustomed had they become to manipulation of their super-devices, and the performance of their intricate experiments.

On the surface, Mason was apparently reconciled to the projects which he watched grow to fruition, from day to day. Within, however, his submerged nature was slowly gaining the ascendency.

Calm, rational, well-balanced mentally, ordinarily,

he nevertheless felt at times a desire to seize some convenient bludgeon and smash—smash to atoms these unbelieveable devices which were to bring grief to mankind. At such moments there seemed to ring in his ears the cry,

"Sodom and Gomorrah! There are no righteous here!"

Mason's Mind Begins to Be Affected By What He Has Seen

HAD he been possessed of an explosive, under the stimulus of his hidden impulse he might have been prompted to sacrifice himself as a martyr for Humanity's sake by reducing the laboratories and occupants into the particles to which the Doctor was so fond of referring. There was no opportunity for this, however, or rather, at best he might be successful in destroying Bridges' laboratory alone, for inflammable material in bulk was stored there.

Johnssen's charges—especially the python and the giant orang—came to mind as Mason pondered on the possibility of using them as active instruments of mischief; but no satisfactory method of employing them as Frankensteins occurred to him. He discarded the idea, for while he might account for the artificial specimens in the zoo, and possibly eliminate Johnssen, there would be left the other laboratories, and the Doctor, Bridges and Stevens with whom to reckon; to say nothing of Suki and either of the watchmen.

Stevens, the youngest of the scientists, was possessed of so many likeable qualities, despite his sacreligious work, that he was a thorn in Mason's conscience when the thought of murder came to him.

But again a voice seemed to cry in Mason's ear,

"Slay! Smight them hip and thigh! Spare not one of the blasphemers!"

Mason began spending much of his time in the electro-physical laboratory, where he came to be accepted by Stevens as a sincere searcher after knowledge, and, as an intimate of his Chief's, entitled to every courtesy and consideration.

Soon Stevens was permitting the older man to assist in some of the work, and as time fled by, and almost a month had elapsed since his arrival, Mason came to acquire a fair working knowledge of the operation of the equipment, without in the least attempting to ascertain the underlying principles.

As each step was checked up here, Stevens would demonstrate to Mason before presenting his findings to the Doctor.

"You know," he once remarked, placing on the laboratory table a live rabbit that had been snared by one of the watchmen, "that what is true of a theorem can often be demonstrated conversely. For instance, if we can create by one method, we should be able to destroy by a diametrically opposite and related method. We have made blood of many varieties with this neo-wave-generator.

"It is equally possible to destroy the blood and tissue elements by reversing the wave polarity by means of this change-over switch.

"This experiment is *entre nous*, if you please. I don't think the Doctor would altogether approve; but I should like to demonstrate to you what I mean.

"Observe this white rabbit—the fine, shell-like pink of its ears, due to the coursing blood. I am going to use a negative and reversed harmonic for rabbits' blood haemoglobin. Watch!"

With Mason behind him, intent on his slightest action, he closed the circuit with the director focused on the rabbit.

Instantaneous Production of Anemia By Rays

THE loud, metallic screech, now familiar to Mason, commenced and ceased almost instantly, and now the rabbit gained his attention.

To his amazement he saw its pinkish ears grow paler, blanch to an opaque white, to the white of a fish's belly—to leprous white. The animal seemed to shrink slightly, to breath with difficulty, all within the compass of a minute.

"The subject," announced Stevens in a satisfied manner, "is dying of pernicious anaemia. At least, I have employed a ray destructive to haemoglobin—the red blood cells. If you were to take a specimen of this rabbit's blood over to Bridges, he could show you under his microscope that practically all the red blood corpuscles had been destroyed. I'd rather you'd take my word for it and refrain from asking him, as this side line is a little secret of my own."

Not again was Mason permitted to view a demonstration of the powers of the destructive wave; but his eyes wandered often to the wave-changing device on the switchboard of the transmitter, as Stevens busied himself with innumerable tasks.

Another week elapsed, during which time the concerted efforts of the scientists were devoted to a duplication of the various principal cells of the nervous system and brain. They worked with amazing speed and accuracy, did these men.

"It wouldn't do, Gary," Doctor Santurn remarked, "to bring that human ovum to life next month, only to have it turn out an imbecile. I am going to make sure there'll be the nucleus of a sound brain within its cranium after we bring it into being."

Mason smiled, despite the impulse to rend and tear.

He could not, however, look into the Doctor's eyes for fear of disclosing his true feelings, as he murmured false phrases of approbation.

Mason had learned to dissimulate.

The Horror Of It All Grows

WORN and haggard from the conflict of forces which raged within him, the elderly archaeologist gave up all thought of the outer world, his every desire centering on accomplishing the destruction of the work and workers of the Plateau Laboratories.

He almost screamed aloud in horror at the artificial birth of the baby, which took place in Doctor Santurn's main laboratory a month later.

The ovum, which had been subjected to activating treatment under the ray months before, and had been in Johnssen's incubator all this while, was now a full-term foetus and needed but the final exposure to the action of the ray to bring to life a lustily bawling youngster.

Before Johnssen, with almost maternal solici-

tude, rushed it off to its incubator—the same, as a matter of fact, that the orang had once occupied—Doctor Santurn examined it carefully.

With an air of disappointment he finally turned to his assistants and remarked, "There has been some slight error of calculation. The infant is a cretin. We shall be delayed with its brain development until we have subjected it to radio-glandular therapy for a while."

Then, against his inner loathing to be present on several succeeding occasions, Mason had witnessed the delicate treatments which transformed the hideous creature into a seraphic-faced, physically perfect specimen of babyhood—like the forced growth of some ugly bulb under hothouse methods into a blooming orchid of rare beauty.

Doctor Santurn, however, would not declare himself satisfied until he should have implanted a section of brain tissue into the child's cranium, for subjection to rapid growth by means of neo-wave stimulation.

Mason had by now passed the bounds of rational reasoning which might have led him to perceive the valuable by-products of the biologist's experiments, the means for eradicating many of the woes and much of the suffering of the peoples of the world. He nursed his fear assiduously, on the Doctor's oft-repeated statement that he meant to use his discoveries, not as a relief measure for "miserable humanity," but to destroy their "erroneous belief" in the Divinity of Creation, and in Spiritual Immortality.

Helplessly, desperately, Mason strove to stem the tide of this blasphemy, but no opening presented itself for favorable action by him.

A bit of the Doctor's irony recurred to him again and again.

In commenting on the birth of the child, Johnssen had said, "We ought to name it."

And Doctor Santurn, head bowed in deep thought for a few moments, had looked up and replied,

"We shall call it MacDuff. Like his namesake, he was not born of woman!"

Playing With a Human Mind

A MILD, Indian summer's evening in late September was declared favorable by Doctor Santurn, for the final brain treatment that should transform MacDuff's mentality from mediocrity to precocity.

Mason stood by, in sterile garb, and watched the preparations that centered about the anterior fontanelle of the infant's cranium.

Trembling, hardly daring to speak for fear of betraying his emotion, he managed to subdue his excitement, and asked to be allowed to participate in the experiment.

"Ah, Gary! I'm delighted to see you running up the 'white flag' at last, after all your opposition! I knew you'd come around in time to the proper way of thinking if I kept you here long enough. Stevens! Kindly set the controls for Friend Mason, and we'll have him close the circuit that will make of this infant a genius."

Grouped on either side of the swaddled infant, intent on its proper placement by Johnssen, stood the Doctor and his assistants. They instinctively moved back a step, through force of habit, as Stevens called, "Ready?"

"Quite ready!" croaked Mason, standing by the controls. He would have to work rapidly with the thirty six seconds of exposure which the apparatus was set to deliver.

"Go!" called the Doctor, intent on the prone infant.

A metallic shriek pierced the quiet of the domed room as Mason threw on the current, and drowned the slight click of another device on the switchboard, which he suddenly shifted without having been bidden to touch it.

With desperate haste he pivoted the wave generator, raised its focus, and swept it slowly across the heads of the unsuspecting group that stood apparently intent on MacDuff.

His actions had been accomplished within fifteen seconds, and then, with a sob, Mason broke the circuit with a hand switch, and let quiet fall again in the laboratory.

Had he failed?

He did not know as he peered intently, fearfully at the immobile faces of the scientists. They stood so quietly—almost like petrified men!

He shrank back in terror as the Doctor raised his head suddenly and pointed an accusing finger at him.

"Gary", said the Doctor bitingly, "you have abused the most sacred canon of hospitality in planning the destruction of your hosts. Don't attempt to deny it!" he barked, as Mason raised a trembling hand.

"If we had been in proper relation to the receptor, we'd have been idiots by this time. The ray you directed at us would have destroyed our brain tissues. You've been carefully watched, you bigoted would-be murderer, despite the fact that you appeared to be free from observation!"

Mason, still white and shaken, was stung to retort by the sharpness of the Doctor's tone.

"Hospitality be hanged when Humanity's happiness is at stake! I'd do it again, if I had the chance!"

"You would?" asked Doctor Santurn, his voice silken with an ominous threat.

"Assuredly!"

"Then listen to this:"

A few whistled notes issued forth incongruously from the lips of the elderly scientist.

"Do you recognize the quaint little air, Gary? It's from Gilbert and Sullivan's 'Mikado'. To refresh your memory, I'll quote the words. 'To make the punishment fit the crime, the punishment fit the crime!'

He paused for a moment to let his meaning impress itself on Mason's mind, and then continued,

"In simple, unadulterated English, my good man, you've asked for a taste of your own medicine!" He nodded to his assistants.

Almost a Riot in the Laboratory

THERE was a wild threshing and straining and heaving of bodies as Mason fought to evade his captors. He reviled and cursed them and spat in their faces as they secured him to the table from which the infant MacDuff had been tenderly removed. Finally, when he perceived the futility of

struggling further, he lay quietly, and just before they focused the transmitter on his head he prayed aloud, not for deliverance, but for the destruction of his captors.

Stevens had replaced the disrupted tube with a new one, and the horrendous screech that now arose as he closed the circuit seemed almost to have something human in its terrible protest.

Within a quarter of an hour from the time he had attempted the lives of the scientists, Gary Mason, the one-time brilliant archaeologist had become metamorphosed into an adult with the mentality of a three year old child—a sleepy child, at that. Doctor Santurn called for Suki to put him to bed.

"Now, gentlemen," he said to his dishevelled assistants, "Science can proceed unhampered by fanatics. It is perhaps fortunate that our guest knew nothing of the mines placed under our buildings, nor of the bombs charged with Bridges' gas which is as deadly as Lewisite. Our knowledge is to be devoted to one great purpose, and rather than let our achievements fall into the hands of lily-livered gentry who might convert it to their own maudlin aims, I repeat our pledge to destroy, should it become necessary, the Plateau and all it houses. Remember, I—— I——" He paused, his face distorted by a spasm of pain.

Swiftly he ripped his surgeon's gown from his body and bared his torso to the gaze of his startled assistants.

"What do you see, Bridges?" he asked in a low tone of alarm. "Quick!"

Bridges, pressing his own face as if in pain, peered intently at the Doctor's neck.

"There's a peculiar enlargement under the angle of the jaw," he said. "Why! It's swelling as I watch!"

"Quick! Trace down the lymph nodes in the neck," the Doctor commanded, his face contorted.

Bridges did so. "Swelling too," he announced, "They're like marbles. It's almost like—I should say like—"

"Go on, man!"

"Like *metastasis* in cancer, when the infection spreads."

"Good Lord!" blurted forth Stevens, inconsistently calling on One he had long scorned. "We never thought these currents would act like X-Rays! Simple high frequency! Who'd have thought—!"

Dr. Santurn Acknowledges Defeat

"DAMN your ignorance!" said the Doctor bitterly. "Ordinarily cancer takes up to a couple of years to kill, and here you've saddled me with an unknown hothouse variety that's killing me in minutes! You gaping fools! Haven't you ever heard of the cumulative effect of Roentgen Rays and Radium Rays? Well, now you know the Neo Wave is similar. Oh, yes, *now* you'll know! Mark you my lads, I'm going fast, and I know it; but you'll follow soon yourselves!

"You, Johnssen! What're you looking at on your arm? What's the trouble with your face, Bridges? Nose seems badly off center. Hi, Stevens, you blighted nincompoop! Do your feet hurt? Poor Trilbys!" He laughed ironically.

With faltering steps he dragged his pain-wracked body to the far corner of the room, and pressed against the wall next a hexagonal panel set invisibly in the tiles.

Bridges was running about like one blinded, futilely wringing his hands.

Johnssen gazed with terrible fixety at his forearm, feeling the chain of nodes that were swelling, up to the arm pit.

And Stevens was crying, frankly and unashamedly as he clutched at his ankle.

"Boys," said the Doctor in a sibilant whisper, "We're beaten! We have no remedy for this sort of venom. It we'd have studied diseased tissues for the sake of Humanity, as our friend Mason might say, there'd be a fighting chance for us. Oh, well! It was fun while it lasted; but something's beaten us.

"Something? Is there a Something?"

The hexagonal panel was open, and deep into the recess in the wall the Doctor inserted his arm. Summoning his waning strength, he managed by a tremendous effort to force a raucous croak through his contracted larynx.

"Allons! Mes enfants!" he called to the heedless trio absorbed in their own separate purgatories. "A short life, and a merry one!"

His arm, sunk to the shoulder in the wall recess, turned slowly.

The Inn-Keeper's Last Words

THE proprietor of the Travelers' Hotel in the village, growing talkative, occasionally, to some favored guest these days, may point toward the Plateau, just as nightfall enshrouds it, and describe it as a place beloved of the Devil.

"Nothing but ruins are standing there since the night of the big explosion," he explains.

"Two men who went up to investigate, dropped in their tracks the moment they entered the gate, and the rest of us at a distance held back a good ways. No one 'ud dare go near the place. Finally the War Department sent an expert. He said the Plateau was chock full of some sort o' poison that'd settled down and blighted everything. 'Nothing can live there for years,' says he.

"So we went and put up a high wall with plenty of warning signs, clear around the old wall; but 'tain't necessary, really. Ha! Try an' get some one who knows to go there for love'r money!

"Would *you* like to explore," he asks pointedly, "Where no green grass grows, nor no vines cover the ruins? Where birds never rise no more once they light there? Sure you wouldn't! The place is damned and haunted, I tell you!"

And then the genial proprietor grows thoughtful.

"There was a kind of elderly fellow stopped here on his way up there, 'most a year ago. Said his friend up there on the Plateau was perfectly all right and aboveboard. I wonder what happened to that there feller?"

He shivers slightly.

"Let's go in an' turn on the light," he suggests.

"The durn subjec' gives me the creeps!"

THE END

A Columbus of Space

By GARRETT P. SERVISS

(*Continued from page* 615)

with a loud report. We were already in the rare upper air, and the friction of our swift rush through it had begun to inflame the steel.

In a few moments more, I thought, I could throw open a window and let in fresh air to revive Jack and to restore my own strength.

But alas! Jack was already beyond all help. When I had opened the window and drawn one refreshing breath, I turned to him and found him pulseless.

It is a wonder that I did not go mad myself. I had brought the car almost to rest, and now it slowly settled until it lay motionless. I was at home at last —but what a home-coming!

Long I sat, discouraged and desperate, with bitter thoughts, and Jack lying there before me. Finally a soft breeze stealing into the open window roused me.

The electric lights were glowing in the car, but as I opened the door I found that it was night outside. I turned back and looked once more at Jack.

He lay as peaceful as a sleeping child. I could bear it no longer. I turned off the light and emerged from the car.

It had landed in a swamp. Straggling trees covered with wild grape-vines were all about.

New York Again

HEEDLESS of where I went, I began to run. Several times I fell headlong, but, recovering my feet, went on. After several hours I found a hunter's deserted hut and entered it. Tired out, I lay down there and slept until the morning sun awoke me.

It is needless to detail all that followed.

I found out that the car had come down in the very heart of the Adirondack wilderness. I occupied a whole day in walking to an inhabited clearing. When I arrived there I had made up my mind what to do. I would keep the secret.

As soon as I could reach New York I hunted up Church. His amazement upon seeing me was boundless. He had long believed that we were all dead. But he agreed with me to keep the secret. Together we went to the Adirondacks, found the car after a week's search, buried Jack's body under a great pine tree, and labored for two whole days to sink the accursed car forever from the sight of men in the mud of the swamp.

Now at last I have told the story, and the world knows what a genius it lost in Edmund Stonewall.

THE END.

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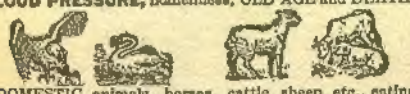

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The Island of Dr. Moreau

(Continued from page 655)

talk, build houses. They were men. It's likely I'll come ashore."

"The water just beyond where you stand is deep—and full of sharks."

"That's my way," said I. "Short and sharp. Presently."

"Wait a minute." He took something out of his pocket that flashed back the sun, and dropped the object at his feet. "That's a loaded revolver," said he. "Montgomery here will do the same. Now we are going up the beach until you are satisfied the distance is safe. Then come and take the revolvers."

"Not I! You have a third between you."

"I want you to think over things, Prendick. In the first place, I never asked you to come upon this island. If we vivisected men, we should import men, not beasts. In the next, we had you drugged last night, had we wanted to work you any mischief; and in the next, now your first panic is over and you can think a little, is Montgomery here quite up to the character you give him? We have chased you for your good. Because this island is full of—inimical phenomena. Besides, why should we want to shoot you when you have just offered to drown yourself?"

"Why did you set—your people on me when I was in the hut?"

"We felt sure of catching you, and bringing you out of danger. Afterwards we drew away from the scent, for your good."

I mused. It seemed just possible. Then I remembered something again. "But I saw," said I, "in the enclosure—"

"That was the puma."

"Look here, Prendick," said Montgomery, "you're a silly ass! Come out of the water and take these revolvers, and talk. We can't do anything more than we could do now."

I will confess that then, and indeed always, I distrusted and dreaded Moreau; but Montgomery was a man I felt I understood.

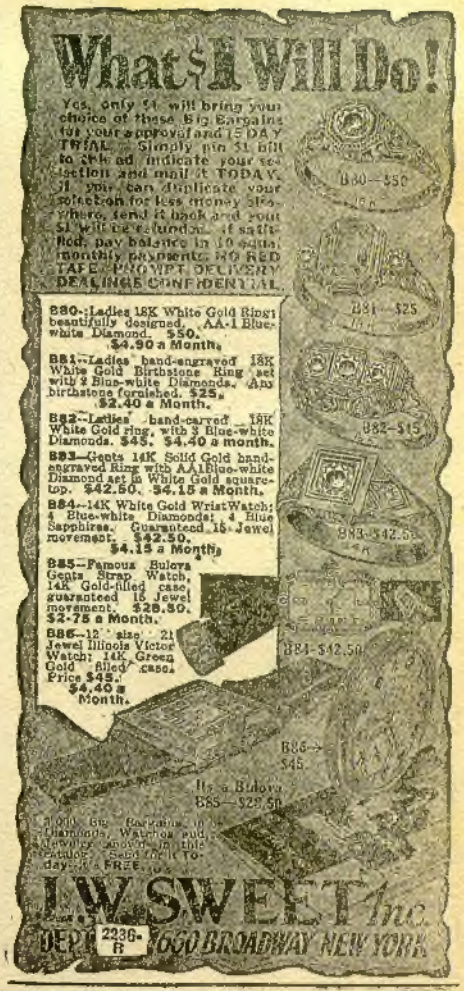
"Go up the beach," said I, after thinking, and added, "holding your hands up."

"Can't do that," said Montgomery, with an explanatory nod over his shoulder. "Undignified."

"Go up to the trees, then," said I, "as you please."

"It's a damned silly ceremony," said Montgomery.

Both turned and faced the six or seven grotesque creatures, who stood there in the sunlight, solid, casting shadows, moving, and yet so incredibly unreal. Montgomery cracked his whip at them, and forthwith they all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turned and fled helter-skelter into the trees; and when Montgomery and Moreau were at a distance I judged sufficient, I waded ashore, and picked up and examined the revolvers. To satisfy myself against the subtlest trickery, I discharged one at a round lump of lava, and had the satisfaction of seeing the stone pulverised and the beach splashed with lead. Still I resitated for a moment.

"I'll take the risk," said I, at last; and with a revolver in each hand I walked up the beach towards them.

"That's better," said Moreau, without affectation. "As it is, you have wasted the best part of my day with your confounded imagination." And with a touch of contempt which humiliated me, he and Montgomery turned and went on in silence before me.

The knot of Beast Men, still wondering stood back among the trees. I passed them as serenely as possible. One started to follow me, but retreated again when Montgomery cracked his whip. The rest stood silent—watching. They may once have been animals; but I never before saw an animal trying to think.

(To be continued in November issue)

LULLABY

By LELAND S. COPELAND

Hush, little nebula,
Don't you cry;
You'll be a blue star
By and by.

Color will alter—
Gold, red, and black,
One after another,
Will garnish your back.

Kiddies called planets
Will spring from your side.
Curling and whirling,
World-stuff will ride.

Round a vast circle,
Performing a year;
Heat must go etherward,
Cool lands appear.

Life soon will follow—
Amœba and worm;
Dinosaur, mammoth,
And Brain for a term.

Warring and slaying,
Fighting for mates,
Brain must live stories
Of loves and of hates.

Wisdom will triumph,
War lords must die,
Happiness triple,
For Brain can go high.

Planet on planet,
Will crash—but don't sigh;
Again you'll be nebula
By and by.

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